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WALTER PATER

BY

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION BY

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CHAPTER I

LITERARY AND ARTISTIC CRITICISM

Walter Pater never succeeded in escaping from himself; and because of his own intensely personal vein his criticism is subject to distinct linitations, gaining as well, it is to be noted, a special force impossible in objective criticism. It was his constant desire to enter into, to assimilate, spiritual moods, philosophies, all things mirrored in historical events. But he was temperamentally unfitted to be the impersonal agent, concerned merely with the function of bringing his material into a new bright focus. He was definitely limited in his appreciation of Rosetti, for example, by his absorbing intellectual passion; "the innermost world of mystical passion in which Rosetti lived was as a locked and darkened chamber to Pater". He suffered the same limitation in interpreting Plato, or the Stoic ideal of Marcus Aurelius; "to him history was only an extension of his own Ego, and he saw himself whithersoever he turned his eyes". The fact is noted by all commentators; by some, such as Benson, with extenuation, and an insistence on the rare "creative criticism" which he evolved; by others, for example, Paul Elmer More, with considerable asperity.

Pater's gain in working ever in the presence of his own ego, made of his work "a species of poetical and interpretative criticism, of a creative order, working upon slender hints and employing artistic productions as texts and <u>motifs</u> for imaginative creation". It was not in dealing with matters of fact, in mere lucid exposition, or even in the enunciation of aesthetic or critical principles that Pater was at his best; but rather, in the imaginative penetration

of events, of past crises of spirit, the elaboration and restoration of "the recondite, the suggestive element" in the subjects he treated.

Such a work as his lecture on Raphael in which his purpose is expository rather than the interpretation of the Raphaelitic spirit, or the bulk of the "Essays from the Guardian" add very little to his reputation. There is no subtle, insinuating elaboration of slender hints. They are not in the characteristic Paterian manner.

Pater exercises this peculiar individual gift of re-incarnating figures from the dead past by a singular critical proceedure. His method was to settle on one distinctive quality of the art or poetry he wishes to illuminate, and subject it to all possible elaboration of suggestive and poetic conjecture.

> "His Studies in the Reaissance, for example, do not attempt to deal with the Renaissance as a whole, as a phenomenon. They do not even attempt to give complete portraits of the men whose names stand as headings to the chapters. Pater's glance is concentrated on some one characteristic of the personages he deals with. The eventful life of Pico della Mirandola is barely alluded to; for in this essay Pater emphasizes, as usual, some particular feature of the man; his endeavor to reconcile Christianity with the philosophy of ancient Greece. * * * We see, then, what Pater's own peculiar aim is. He fastens his attention on one particular characteristic of a thing and illuminates it so strongly with his "gemlike flame" that he reinterprets it, gives it a new value, exercising, in short, creative criticism, and proving Wilde's theory that criticism

is a more difficult task than creation itself".*

It has been frequently remarked that the writers of the early nineteenth century were sustained by religion and misunderstood Hellenism. Pater cannot be accurately assigned to either group, for though his Hellenism was in its characteristic qualities chiefly of his own creation, it was a creation based not upon misapprehension, or lack of sympathetic imagination, but upon certain peculiarities of temperament which colored the romantic, shadowy, complex manifestations of Greek antiquity which remained to him, with the roseate glow of his own impassioned imagination.

A kindred temperament, also born out of its age, we may fancy from Pater's sympathetic essay, was Winckelmann, whose chief quality he fixes upon as a peculiar, intuitive aptitude for the apprehension of life, as inspiration in the sphere of art which opened "a new organ for the human spirit." "Hellenism," remarks Pater in the essay, "has always been most effectively conceived by those who have crept into it out of an intellectual world in which the sombre elements predominate." In that case Winckelmann sprang from excellent soil; the child of a tradesman, a youth growing to manhood in the most sordid circumstances, a dull uninspired program of education, from which he had to flee incontinently to escape being enmeshed in German theology, all conspired to give Winckelmann a full bitter potion of the discipline of repression.

No aesthetic theorist ever held to those ideas of life and conduct and the appreciation of the beautiful which he had evolved in long years of study and reflection, with more passionate affirmation than Pater, yet he never, in marked contrast to Matthew Arnold, went

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* J. M. Kennedy. English Literature 1880-1905. P. 32 and 37.

on the stump, so to speak, for his ideals. It was but a natural conformity to the tenets of his philosophy, and one perhaps which we should only expect.

As he neglected to champion them, he may be said to have scarcely formulated them. We can abstract no such catch-words as "the grand manner", "high seriousness," "sweetness and light", from his writings. As succinct a statement of a dominant thought as may be found appears in the famous Conclusion to The Renaissance, where he sums up "the good, the beautiful and the true" of existence as characterized by the note of intellectual passion, of receptivity toward sensuous impression, of burning with ecstatic, lambent flame, which epitomize "success in life." It was the philosophy minutely set forth in Marius the Epicurean, and one, as Pater himself realized, easy of misinterpretation. Detailed discussion of the ethical implications of this philosophy of life is reserved for the chapter on Marius the Epicurean.

In the "Essay on Style" we get the closest approach there is to an exposition of Pater's own art. The close distinction which has been made of late between prose and verse is in danger of being pressed too closely, he finds. The difference in form is often mistaken for one of spirit; when, as a matter of fact, there is much prose cast in verse form; and there is a thoroughly poetic quality attained in some varieties of prose. Imaginative prose, -- Pater calls it "the special and opportune art of the modern world", as suited best to the complexity of our life, and the naturalistic trend of art and literature today. The true stylist, the literary artist, will address himself to a scholarly audience, one with the "male conscience", with delicate appreciation and wide experience in litera-

ture. He delights in a strict economy of means, in fitting the right word into its appropriate context, finding the strenuousness of the search stimulating, productive of the highest artistic pleasure; he must share Flaubert's ideal of the right word or phrase whose use is as inevitable as though predestined, and the guarantee of perfection! an organic, architectural unity of design and effect.

As an aesthetic critic he attempted to combat the tendency toward abstraction, formalization, as adding nothing to the enjoyment of art or poetry, and failing even in giving any new precision to such words as beauty, excellence, art, poetry, which are hopelessly abstract and, per se, completely beyond the power of definition.

> "Beauty, like all other qualities presented to human experience, is relative; and the definition of it becomes unmeaning and useless in proportion to its abstractness. *** What is important, then, is not that the critic should possess a correct abstract definition of beauty for the intellect, but a certain kind of temperament, the power of being deeply moved by the presence of beautiful objects. He will remember always that beauty exists in many forms. To him all periods, types, schools of taste, are in themselves equal. In all ages there have been some excellent workmen, and some excellent work done. The question he asks is always: -- In whom did the stir, the genius, the sentiment of the period find itself? Where was the receptacle of its refinement, its elevation, its taste? "The ages are all

equal," says William Blake, 'but genius is always above its age.'"

In "The School of Giorgione" he ventures with unusual explicitness to promulgate aesthetic principles. Art addresses us neither through pure sense nor pure reason, but through the "imaginative reason", so that each art has "its own peculiar and untranslatable sensuous charm, has its own special mode of reaching the imagination, its own special responsibilities to its material. One of the functions of aesthetic criticism is to define these limitations; to estimate the degree in which a given work of art fulfils its responsibilities to its special material," to present, in short, "a philosophy of the variations of the beautiful." Pater does, however, in working toward another idea prominent in his aesthetics, admit "although each art has thus its own specific order of impressions ... yet it is noticeable that, in its special mode of handling its given material, each art may be observed to pass into the condition of some other art", and shortly there comes the pronunciamento laid down with unusual emphasis and clarity, "All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music."

In the field of art criticism, Pater still remained a distinctly literary influence. Perhaps it is well that he devoted little attention to the material or technical aspects of art. Mr. A. C. Benson has devoted considerable time and care to setting forth the errors which he committed in his artistic judgements. His mission was the revelation of the poetical, suggestive quality in art, of what it meant to him, and what he conceived to be its general significance. He shared with Ruskin perhaps the feeling of the need for the humanization of art, of the opportunity, in treating it with a high seriousness, to widen and deepen immeasurably its power in a

society overindustrialized, over-commercialized, weary of thousand-giged respectability and laissez faire.

One must be on his guard here again not to over-state the case; for the bracketting of Pater with Ruskin would endow him with a mission, an in-touch-ness with the stream of nineteenth century thought and activity which he was far from experiencing, from which he certainly shrank.

Pater's proceedure, in bringing out all the nuances of "ex-pressiveness" in interpreting the sentiment of art, is happily put by Ferris Greenslet, Says Greenslet, "he studies history, biography, letters, fragmentary remains, all the flotsam and jetsam of the past, and revives the atmosphere, or -- to use a word savouring of the shop - the milieu of the artist; then he subjects the painter's work to a kind of long, mystic meditation, until by virtue of his mediumship we behold the very spirit of it, and even partake of the mood wherein it was created."

Among the characteristic motives of the Renaissance which Pater mentions appear "the care for physical beauty, the worship of the body, the breaking down of those limits which the religious system of the middle age imposed on the heart and the imagination." Sandro Botticelli came "a poetical painter, blending the charm of story and sentiment, the medium of the art of poetry, with the charm of line and color" as a new interpreter of the relitious sentiment, leaving behind him the simple, received religion of the century which pre-ceded him, taking his inspiration from the well-springs of his own religious emotion.

Botticelli's work exhibits a strange blending of the real and the ideal, "that middle world in which men take no sides in the great conflicts, and decide no great causes, and make no great refusals.

He thus sets himself the limits within which art, undisturbed by any moral ambition, does its most sincere and surest work." Pater speaks so frequently of the dis-severing of art from "moral ambition" that we cannot well avoid the conclusion that he considered such a separation as nothing less than an emancipation for beauty.

In the "Essay on Style" the same creed is stated for literary art, the spokesman this time being Flaubert.

> "Those who write in good style are sometimes accused of a neglect of ideas, and of the moral end, as if the end of the physician were something else than healing, of the painter than painting -- as if the end of art were not, before all else, the beautiful".

The crop which grew from the seed sown by Pater may be found flourishing in ripe luxuriance in the artistic theories laid down by Oscar Wilde in the preface to Dorian Gray. A few examples will be sufficient.

> "No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style."
>
> "Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for his art."
>
> "The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely."
>
> "All art is quite useless."

This is the direct, succinct statement of the "art for art's sake" creed of the whole aesthetic school.

One of the most famous examples of Pater's invasive imagination is the consummate essay "Leonardo da Vinci", in which occurs

the celebrated, often quoted, passage on La Gionconda. Da Vinci's art was born of the conflict of curiosity and the desire for beauty.

> "This struggle between the reason and its ideas, and the senses, the desire of beauty, is the key to Leonardo's life at Milan -- his restlessness, his endless re-touchings, his odd experiments with colour."

In the years which followed, Da Vinci's life has all the colour and glamourous movement which we at the distance of five centuries find so picturesque; romantic adventure, the brilliance and excitement of court life, the chastening of poverty and distress. And all the while his expanding genius, Goethean in its proportions, urged him on to ceaseless bold experimentation, unheard-of artistic invention. All the high zest and torturing travail of the passionately active intellectual principle in his nature (as an approach to maturity so attractive to Pater himself!) was finally devoted to his portrayal of the Florentine women, "these languid women", as Pater calls the refined, cultivated feminine grace which the polished society of Florence had evolved, with a wealth of symbolical expression, "a cryptic language for fancies all his own."

The finest flower of his genius, revaling this peculiar quality in him, occurs in La Gioconda. And in the passage which attempts to enter into the artist's mood and render poetically the obscure message buried in the lady's enigmatic smile occurs the most revealing instance of Pater's subtle genius. The tradition of the description is so firmly grounded, that the passage may be rendered without apology.

> "The presence that thus rose so strangely beside the waters is expressive of what in the ways of a thousand

years men had come to desire. Hers is the head upon which all the ends of the world are come and the eyelids are a little weary. It is a beauty wrought out from within upon the flesh, the deposit, little cell by cell, of strange thoughts and fantastic reveries and exquisite passions. Set it for a moment beside one of those white Greek goddesses or beautiful women of antiquity, and how would they be troubled by this beauty, into which the soul with all its maladies has passed! All the thoughts and experience of the world have etched and moulded there, in that which they have of power to refine and make expressive the outward form, the animalism of Greece, the lust of Rome, the reverie of the middle age with its spiritual ambition and imaginative loves, the return of the Pagan world, the sins of the Borgias. She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave; and has been a diver in deep seas and keeps their fallen day about her; and trafficked for strange webs with Eastern merchants; and, as Leda, was the mother of Helen of Troy, and as Saint Anne, the mother of Mary; and all this has been to her but as the sound of lyres and flutes, and lives only in the delicacy with which it has moulded the changing lineaments, and tinged the eyelids and the hands. The fancy of a perpetual life, sweeping together ten thousand experiences, is an old one; and modern thought has conceived the idea of humanity as wrought upon by and summing up in itself all modes of thought and life. Certainly Lady Lisa might stand as the embodiment of the old

fancy, the symbol of the modern idea."

Voicing the patriotic sentiment which he possessed to a good healthful degree, Pater reflected in the "Postcript" to Appreciations upon "the contorted, proportionless accumulation of our knowledge and experience, our science and history, our hopes and disillusion", all of which needed so badly to be set in order, out of which some harmony should be produced by the proper manipulation of the instrument most readily at hand, the English language. Pater speaks here in the same vein as in the "Essay on Style", -- "as the French write", with Flaubert plainly in mind, "as scholars should write", a bit of special pleading for his own stylistic formulas.

But first he is lead into attempting the difficult task of fixing and differentiating between the terms classic and romantic. He sets out realizing that they are tags, convenient labels for certain peculiarities of substance or mood. The romantic spirit is characterized by a love of the past, with the emphasis placed strongly upon the intimately human side of history; Walter Scott's love of strange adventure and dominating personality in history, exemplified in his treatment of Richard Coeur de Leon, and Maurice Hewlett's later veriations upon the same theme. As a matter of principle, it is "the addition of strangeness to beauty", the free, exploring spirit of the individual, who, being a law unto himself, makes and unmakes artistic law, recognizing no other arbiter than the promptings of his own aesthetic conscience.

In brief, Pater asks for the treatment of material attractive to the romantic spirit, in the classic manner. It is a fantastic union of incompatible elements, idyllic, speciously convincing as he phrases it, yet involving certain disaster, as Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne each learned.

Pater found in the work of Pica della Mirandola the expression of a general purpose broadly characteristic of the fifteenth century Italian Renaissance, whose mission it was to reconcile Christianity with the natural charm they felt in the early pagan Greek worship. Pico was "one of the last who seriously and sincerely entertained the claim on men's faith of the pagan religions." He absorbed without reservation the Platonic cultus of his time, with special affinity for the mystical elements therein, "the chilling touch of the abstract and disembodied beauty Platonists profess to long for." He scanned sympathetically and minutely the legends and myths of the older cosmogonies. Yet he was firmly intrenched in the philosophy of the School. In the manner characteristic of knight-errants of philosophy, he offered to defend nine hundred paradoxes upon his first arrival at Rome, and he died in the habit of Saint Dominic.

The writing of Pico was inspired by deep emotion, compounded of a curious blending of the religious and artistic sensibilities with which he was so richly endowed. However he fell short of complete attainment of his ideal, he remains a significant figure, at least, of the upward impulse to achieve, in a century "great rather by what it designed to do or aspired to do, than by what it actually achieved."

Ex forti dulcedo -- out of the strong, sweetness,--Pater took as the leitmotif of his appreciation of the poetical quality of Michelangelo's sculpture. His was a lovely, but virile, genius, securing consummate artistry and ideality of expression by a certain incompleteness in the conception of its subject. And his verse too follows closely in its "effort to tranquillize and sweeten life in idealizing its vehement sentiments", the latter of the two great traditional types, the one expressed in the Vita Nuova of Dante, the

other in the Platonic tradition. He is the poet of "all those vague fancies, misgivings, presentiments, which shift and mix and are defined and fade again, whenever the thoughts try to fix themselves with sincerity on the conditions and surroundings of the disembodied spirit."

In "Joachim du Bellay" Pater shows how the grace of the Italian Renaissance met and blended with the spirit of the north in sixteenth century France, producing in art and poetry, "a light, aerial delicacy, a simple elegance, -- une nettete remarquable d' execution, as is seen in the paintings of Francois Clouet, the poetry of Francois Villon, and the decoration of the French Gothic cathedrals.

A detailed development of this softening influence in French literature, which was soon embraced warmly and prosecuted by native French writers, came out of the Pleades, a school tracing its nativity to the verse of Ronsard. The call to arms of the Plead was sounded by Joachim du Bellay in a tract entitled La Deffense et Illustration de la langue Francoyse, designed to show how the French language might be endowed with the rich breadth and elegance of Greek and Latin.

From this circumstance, and from the intrinsic value of his verse, Joachim du Bellay was selected by Pater because the manner of the age was so faithfully mirrored in his work. To us now it may appear as stilted and artificial as upholstery of the haircloth period, as rococco as the faded, weathered "gingerbread" architecture, to which the name of Queen Anne is commonly attached, but, Pater cautions, it has one great redeeming quality, style; "and everything that has style, that has been done as no other man or age could have done it, as it could never, for all our trying, be done again, has

its true value and interest." And so, for perfection of taste, and "a certain silvery grace of fancy", the Plead school may still inspire in us the relish of something, something trivial perhaps, but done with a light perfection, a touch so deft that its purity of effect redeems it, and makes it worthy of a permanent place in literature.

CHAPTER II

MARIUS THE EPICUREAN

It was perhaps inevitable that Pater should undertake some more ambitious study of the classical culture of Greece and Rome to which he felt so strongly drawn, than the occasional critical essays. The scene of Marius the Epicurean is laid in the second century of the Christian era. It was a transitional period in intellectual as well as political history, and, as such periods are apt to be, one mildly flavored with decay. That the suggestion of approaching dissolution had a peculiar fascination for a certain romantic emotional quality in Pater's temperament, is revealed significantly in the essay on Coleridge.

"Forms of intellectual and spiritual culture," Pater remarked in discussing Coleridge's attempt to "apprehend the absolute" in an age dominated by the relative spirit, "sometimes exercise their subtlest and most artful charm when life is already passing from them."

The intellectual temper of the age was not constructive. The stream of genuine inspiration was spent, and philosophy was electic, synthetic, concerned with the reconciliation and amalgamation of all schools and religions to satisfy what might be called a world-wide ennui of spirit.

The capital of the world of thought as well as fashion was Alexandria, a city brilliant and cosmopolitan, where Hellenistic and Oriental culture met, and in their fusion produced all the hybird neo-cults. The faith of the upper classes in the traditional relig-

ion of Numa had lost all vitality. They amused themselves with all philosophies, stoicism, Platonism, neopythagoreanism, and dialectics.

But it was remote from the atmosphere of Rome, at White-nights, "an old country-house, half farm, half villa," that Marius was born, near the end of the reign of Antoninus Pius. Marius was educated devoutly in the old religion, because of the remoteness of the villa from the decadent thought of the urban centres, and perhaps because of a traditional partly sacerdotal character which clung to the male head of the family, and which Marius' father carefully cherished.

To familiarity with the ritual and symbolism of religion, Marius joined "a great seriousness -- an impressibility to the sacredness of time, of life and its events, and the circumstances of family fellowship", all of which became the sign in him of the development far beyond the ordinary of a sense of relitious responsibility. All this filled the lad with a sense of reverence, of the "sacred presences" with which life seemed to be filled. The appeal of the religion was for him a strange mingling of sensuousness and austerity ---a trait which he carried with him throughout his life, and one which furnishes us with the true key to his nature. He was at once highly intellectual, deeply religious, and strangely susceptible to sense-impressions, as all aesthetic natures must be. The motive of his story, which is,as a story, the merest thread of narrative, is his earnest attempt to orient himself in the world, to find a religious or philosophical basis upon which he can adjust the antagonistic elements in his nature.

Marius was, of course, tremendously self-conscious. From the first time he began to think and observe, he fell into a practical, if not strictly philosophic, solipsism. Reality for him was only that which he found within himself, and his keenest observation was

only pointed by its application to himself. Marius was, most intensely, an individualist. Raymond Laurent* finds that in Marius, "Le probleme qui...s'offre a nous et se trouve peu a peu resolu, est le triomphe de l'individualisme sur les forces ennemies qui l'oppriment."

When Marius had attained the stature of "a tall school boy" his mother died, and he was sent to Pisa to continue his education. Here he met Flavian. It is curious, despite the romantic tone of the book, that Marius formed so few attachments. For the most part, the existence of his fellows was shadowy, unreal, and a matter of slight importance to him. With the exception of Marius himself, the characters are little better than lay figures, which occupy positions of more or less prominence, but whose definiteness is owing more to their position in relation to the central figure, than to their importance in their own character. Here we come upon one of Pater's most definite limitations as a literary artist. The delineation of Marius' character, a type touched with the subtle and artful charm of decadence he accomplished with exquisite success, and one recognizes it from the most cursory reading as partly autobiographical. It is the same sympathy in the creation of personality which he infused into his most effective descriptive passages, in which he painted the decaying landscape of the Roman campagna:

> "Altho the great plain was dying steadily, a new race of wild birds establishing itself there, as he knew enough of their habits to understand, and the idle contadino with his never-ending ditty of decay and death replacing the lusty Roman labourer, never had that poetic region between Rome and the

*Raymond Laurent. Etudes Anglaises, Paris. 1910. p.180

> sea more deeply impressed him than on this sunless day of early autumn, under which all that fell within the immense horizon was presented in one uniform tone of a clear, penitential blue...From time to time, the way was still redolent of the floral relics of summer, daphne and myrtle-blossom, sheltered in the little hollows and ravines."*

But Pater does not put the breath of life in a character such as Cornelius, the young Roman soldier who later becomes the most intimate friend of Marius. He is blithe, serene, self-sufficient and unquestioning, and utterly unreal. Pater's description of Cornelius would bear the same relation to that of Marius, one feels, as his interpretation of the atmosphere of the Italian country of the time would have to an attempt to describe a rural America of hard roads, tractors, barbed wire fences, red barns, tile silos, shiny white houses, and scientific farmers.

Flavian, with whom Marius formed the first of his two friendships, was three years Marius' senior, poor, habitually proud, brilliant with a somewhat elegant literary drift, and a turn for what might be called the euphuism of life. Flavian was, even at his early age, a sensualist, and it was in his friendship with Flavian that Marius made his first intimate contact with evil in seductive guise.

> "How often, afterwards, did evil things present themselves in malign association with the memory of that beautiful head, and with a kind of borrowed sanction and charm in its natural grace!"*

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* Marius the Epicurean. II.220-221.
Ibid. Ip. 57.

But Marius remained untouched by the luxurious influence of the town, preserved by what Mr. A. C. Benson called "a certain coldness and fastidiousness of temperament", in which, perhaps, the religious note was significant.

Marius had already begun to develop. The same meditative turn of mind which had dominated his sensual nature was exhibited in his attitude toward the schoolboy games of his associates. He noted their wholehearted struggle for prizes already become in his mind trivial. He could still appreciate the heat of battle and the joy of successful competition sympathetically, but it was inconceivable that he should enter into them with the same conpleteness. He was viewing life as a drama, or procession. Whatever figure of speech you like, it is the characteristic attitude of mind of the spectator.

This incipient feeling of apartness which was later to grow into a fundamental constituent of character, was accompanied by the first intimations of Epicureanism.

> "He was acquiring what it is the chief function of all higher education to impart, the art, namely, of so relieving the ideal or poetic traits, the elements of distinction, in our everyday life--of so exclusively living in them--that the unadorned remainder of it, the mere drift or <u>debris</u> of our days, comes to be as tho it were not."*

Marius and Flavian pursued their literary training together, an important incident of which was the reading of the "<u>Golden Book</u>" of Apuleius, containing the story of Cupid and Psyche. However important the occasion was in stimulating Marius, it is of considerably less interest to one who wishes to follow the development of Marius'

* Ibid. p.57.

character, and who would be willing to accept his successive states of mind as indicated, without the offering of lengthy evidence in their support. The fact that the adaptation in the hands of Pater is very finely done, scarcely atones for a break of fifty pages in the narrative.

Flavian became the victim of a pestilence which the army, recently returned from Parthia, brought with it. In the last moments, the talent of Flavian shone most brightly, and Marius conceived an ardent admiration for the "richness of imagery" and "firmness of outline" which was the especial quality of his writing.

"Flavian was no more." His death came to Marius like "a final revelation of nothing less than the soul's extinction", and marked the end of Marius' childish religious faith. It was the first milestone on his soul's journey.

After this, it is but natural that we find Marius, lacking his only intimate, congenial human relationship, turning with deep passion to the life of reflection, and accepting an existence of detachment from his fellows without complaint. It was the sign of the real budding of the "high Epicureanism" which found "a poetic beauty in mere clearness of thought."

The writings of Heraclitus and Aristippus were the sources from which Marius drew strength to fortify himself in his new position. From the Heraclitean cosmogony Marius learned that the world is a machine; that nature is in a constant state of flux, of constant mutation and qualitative transformation. What was most important of all, he came to believe in sensation as the criterion of truth. This doctrine he applied empirically and faithfully, and reality, when re-

duced to the experience of the individual, came to consist for him of the bital and significant experience which was his own; that of all others vague, because vicarious. He learned "that the individual is to himself the measure of all things, and to rely on the exclusive certainty to himself of his own impressions". This might and did easily become the theoretical basis for a hedonistic code of conduct.

Altho Heraclitus taught that "tout metaphysique est vaine qui pretend a expliquer l'essence et l'etre"*, Marius found that "abstract philosophy became with Aristippus a very subtly practical wordly-wisdom". Abstract metaphysics held not only possibilities for the individual to bewilder himself methodically, but, for him who holds the key to them, to become translated into intelligent conduct, with a valuable adjunct in the way of possibilities rich in sentiment. These elements drawn from Heraclitus and the Cyrenian philosophy joined themselves to Marius' natural deftness in seeking out and fastening upon "the ideal or poetic traits" of life, so that the measure of completeness in life came to mean for him the finding of "elements of distinction" in it, and the conscious cultivation of an attitude of obliviousness to its "drift or debris".

> "Marius cherche une doctrine, pratique, une culture, une education destinee a elargir et affiner ses facultes receptives, c est-a-dire le domaine des sensations et de l'emotion. Le plaisir n'est pas le terme de cette philosophie; celle-ci a pour ideal une general completeness of life, vie dont la vie est le but, ou tous les phenomenes concourent.

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* Laurent. p.194.

accord auquel rien ne manque de ce qui existe,
sorte de musique au sens platonicien du mot".*

This educative culture, the highest apprehension of his sensations and emotions, together with a fulness of life in which the emphasis was laid upon "aesthetic charm" and "austerity of mind" became Marius' chief pursuit. To pass most swiftly from point to point, to "be present always at the focus where the greatest number of vital forces unite in their purest enerty", to make ecstacy, "exquisite passion", the mark of the successful life, became the creed of "the new Cyrenaicism" evolved by Marius. It is the very essence of the philosophy of life of Pater himself, as stated in the famous "Conclusion" in The Renaissance, which he held consistently from the beginning to the end of his career.

With the Cyrenaic creed definitely formulated, Marius' nature whose dual character was alluded to at the outset, was rounded out. His was to be an attitude, conscicusly assumed, of active receptivity to the sensual elements in life, and an intellectualizing of vivid sensation into "whatever form of human life might be heroic, impassioned, ideal", the ideal of life being untouched by hedonism, but aiming rather at "a general completeness."

The aim being a complete life, Marius settled upon the selective principle as a working program. He found it desirable to cherish as precious all intense sensation, "including noble pain and sorrow even", and to discard and obliterate the rest by a deliberate closing of the avenues of sense to life's debris. The result was the development of a fastidiousness and refinement so delicately pointed that he gave himself up wholeheartedly to the cultivation of the aesthetic.

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* Laurent. p. 194.

Marius became a person temperamentally akin to the honnete homme of the age de la preciosite whose distinctive quality of spirit was described by Mere with brilliant penetration as consisting "principalement n'avoir pas ce je ne sais quoi de noble et d'exquis qui eleve un honnete homme au-dessus d'un autre honnete homme." *

After having formulated the creed of aestheticism and intensity of sensation, Pater assumed the task of making a place for morality in it. For the place of morality is not immediately perceived. To one bent on the "impassioned realization of experience" morality may appear very much like a convention which must be resolutely brushed aside in the quest of self-realization. But to Marius, whom we can scarcely conceive of being immoral, but who might easily have fallen into an attitude that was non-moral, the position of morality in the aesthetic philosophy was clearly outlined. In a life whose ultimate happiness is based upon a "pleasure and the good which come from the fair adornment of life itself" the absence of a moral code would be a kind of incompleteness, and incompleteness an imperfection. Pater's insight failed to discover to him, as Mr. Robert Shafer * has pointed out, that the purely aesthetic appeal for morality and religion is in effect the most insidious attack upon it. For in such instances, both morality and religion become the handmaidens of a philosophy or cult, and Philosophy invariably betrays Morality.

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* Mere. Lettre a Mme. la Duchesse de Lesdiguieres, Lanson, Lettres du XVII siecle, p.150,151. quoted Histoire illustree de la Litterature Francaise. Paris, 1918. by E. Abry; C.Audio; P.Crouzet. p. 138.

Robert Shafer. Walter Pater Redivivus. Reprinted from The Open Court, April, 1920. p. 8-9.

At the end of his career, Marius was to experience such a recrudescence of his religious instincts, as he now held in framing his apology for morals. Throughout his life, from the time he abandoned the old traditional religion and set sail on the sea of philosophy, Marius never succeeded in divorcing himself from his intense subjectivity. The frequent use of the word "mused" indicates his reaction to his experiences. He recollected in tranquility the sensations and ideas of the past, turned them over and examined them idly, with an interest that was casual and dilettante, but unflagging. When his later observations among the Christians at Cecilia's house reawakened his early susceptibility to emotional religious experience, the conversion was never more actual than a graceful response to the aesthetic qualities of the new relition--the mystery of the Host, the sacerdotal air of the white-robed bishop, the happy faces of worshippers, and stifled sobs of penitents, the element of novelty in a faith based upon a vaguely apprehended Hebrew cosmogony, and filled with a buoyant hope that blew with stimulating, exhilarating freshness across an age weary of hard speculation, and sophisticated thought.

We find Marius, nineteen years old, eminently the Epicurean, at court, attached to the person of the emperor in the capacity of amanuensis. The day after Marius' arrival in Rome, the emperor returned triumphantly from a bloodless campaign on the Danube. The emperor is described sympathetically, with the purpose in view of bringing out the intimate, personal element in a character whose moral virtue, stoical philosophy, and imperial tolerance history has fully treated, but whose essential humanity has seldom been given such a kindly touch as Pater's.

Marius first saw Marcus Aurelius in the triumphal procession. He saw a man about forty-five years old; "with prominent eyes--eyes which, although demurely downcast during this essentially religious ceremony, were by nature broadly and benignantly observant;" hair brown and "clustering thickly"; a brow "low, broad and clear...the brow of one who, amid the blindness of perplexity of the people about him, understood all things clearly".

The outward serenity of the emperor, mottled from time to time, it seemed to Marius, by the passing shadow of some unguessed cloud upon the spirit, strengthened the feeling of asceticism which the spareness of the emperor's body gave him. The interview which followed sometime afterward, in which Marius was introduced to the emperor, left him with his first impressions of Aurelius, amplified and intensified. At this time he also met the empress Faustina,--a mysterious, enigmatic, curiosity-stimulating beauty, about whom all Rome gabbled, and whose beauty and "license of gaze" occupied his mind for some time.

Some months later Marius, together with Aurelius, Faustina, "a crowd of exquisites", and all the fashionable people who found the cultivation of philosophy pleasant and profitable, assembled at the temple of Peace to hear Marcus Cornelius Fronto discourse on the Nature of Morals, in which Fronto was to recommend morality to the company according to the doctrine of Stoicism.

Marius was, at this time, still possessed with the desire to taste all the experiences of life with intense ecstacy. We can imagine him in these days breaking off the chain of his reflections and apostrophizing Life in the words of Stevenson's Will o' the Mill:

> '"You would not have me die like a dog and not see all that is to be seen, and do all that a man can do, let it be good or evil? You would not have me spend all my days between this road here and the river, and not so much as make a motion to be up and live my own life?"'

Yet too, as was indicated above,* Marius was concerned with the disposal of his moral code. Tho he had yielded up his religious faith upon attaining his intellectual majority, he clung tenaciously to the moral regiment which his own strong ethical bent demanded. Now as he came under the influence of the stoic philosophy in proximity to the emperor and old Fronto, he was wavering somewhat in the pursuit of intensity. As he inclined more and more to the stoic position, he began to see--and in the discourse of old Fronto, the seeing became clearer--how the old morality might be reconciled to the new philosophy, the avenue of escape being a "kind of artistic order in life" by which morality, or at least practical rectitude, would receive the sanction of custom, and of good taste.

At this point Pater introduces his own criticism of the Cyrenaic view of life:

> "And we may note, as Marius could hardly have done, that Cyrenaicism is ever the characteristic philosophy of youth, ardent, but narrow in its survey--sincere, but apt to become one-sided, or even fanatical. It is one of those subjective and partial ideals, based on vivid, because limited, apprehension of the truth of one aspect of experience (in this case, of the beauty of the world, and the

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* p.9

brevity of man's life there) which it may be said to be the special vocation of the young to express." *

The precise way in which the philosophy of Cyrenaicism was costly to him did not appeal immediately to Marius in any such way as it appears in the clear exposition which Pater gave it. But he did come to detect "some craming, narrowing, costly, preference of one part of his own nature" and that he "paid a great price" for such a life "in the sacrifice of a thousand sympathies."

While conscious of an active dissatisfaction with a life which he felt lacked breadth, Marius again visited the emperor. Aurelius had just determined to sell the treasures of the imperial household at auction in order to obtain funds to prosecute the war. Marius finds him, as Benson says, feeling "an austere joy in the pleasure of a deep philosophical detachment from the world". Because of his temperamental sensitiveness to the psychical states of others, sharpened, as it was, by the state of mind he was in, Marius could not but feel himself tremendously impressed by the joy which the emperor felt in renunciation, which he realized readily enough, was of a higher and deeper quality than the purest Epicurean delight he might have experienced in their continued possession.

Marius' personal relationship with the emperor came to an abrupt and poignantly tragic end. On an official visit to Praeneste, a favorite rural retreat of Aurelius', he found the imperial residence prostrated with grief because of an incurable illness which had seized the child Annius Verus. By an inadvertent trespass on the privacy of the emperor's grief, he saw him carry the dying child away "pressed close to his bosom, as if he yearned just then for one thing only, to be united, to be absolutely one with it, in its ob-

secure distress."

A short time later he saw Aurelius depart for the war, "to make public rule nothing less than a sacrifice of himself according to Plato's requirement, now consummated in his setting forth for the campaign on the Danube."

Several years are supposed to have passed. Marius was attending a notable banquet at which both the young Commodus and the great Apuleius were present. Marius engaged Apuleius in conversation on the terrace after the banquet had broken up. Apuleius was a Platonist, but one who made pretensions to "ideal vision", and drew from his lively interest in the outward world (his extraordinary personal history had been one which exhibited ideally the life of passing from point to point to reach centres of intensity) a peculiar conception of the Platonic Idea.

Apuleius revealed to Marius his belief in a middle order of beings midway between the gods and men, "through whom our aspirations are conveyed to the gods, and theirs to us". It is, in brief, angelology. This view of the world brought to him very nearly a heightened feeling of the loneliness of the actual world. Yet for all the appeal of such fantastic visions to his nature, Marius felt that he must cling to the world of sense, "must still hold by what his eyes really saw."

While the ideas he gained from Apuleius were still vivid, he visited with Cornelius, a Roman knight whom he had met on his first journey to Rome, and with whom he had contracted a friendship deeper than any other attachment he ever experienced, the house of Cecilia, a Christian, and friend of the latter, whom Marius suspected of being a strong influence in preserving the freshness and strength and simplicity of character which he marvelled at in Cornelius.

The house of Cecilia revived in Marius to an overwhelming degree certain of his early recollections. He experienced again the serious joy he had conceived in places especially sympathetic to his emotional nature, the hieratic significance which he attached to the singing of children, to the thought of virtuous women, and "all the various affections of family life under its most natural conditions."

Marius investigated an old garden in the rear of the house, anc came upon the burying place of the Cecilii which Cecilia had devoted to the Christian cause, and which was rapidly becoming"a vast necropolis". There was a special appeal for Marius in the fact that these people, contrary to the current pagan custom of burning the bodies of the deceased and preserving the ashes in elaborate urns, faithfully preserved the whole body, as though fearful of the complete dissolution of the material body, and, perhaps, sensible of "some peculiar feeling of hope they entertained concerning the body". Indeed, it seemed to Marius that the ideal of hope had become almost what might be called the motif of the tomb. He found it in the inscriptions which he noticed carefully;

> "Januarius, Agapetus, Felicitas; Martyrs!
> refresh, I pray you, the soul of Cecil,
> of Cornelius!

in the placing of favorite toys beside the graves of children; in the consolations of the martyrs' graves. There was a mystical appeal in this"strange new hope" which played movingly upon his sensuous nature, so heavily weighed down with Weltschmerz. In this case, his stern decidion, the intellectual exigency by which he demanded of himself that he confine himself to his empirical philosophy, was relaxed, and the memory of his mystical experience, unexplained, and amounting almost to intuition, he carried over into his emotional life, and

germinated "a new element therein, with which, consistently with his own chosen maxim, he must make terms."

It was the genius of the Christianity of the time, as Pater saw it that

> "the church was true for a moment, truer, perhaps, than she would ever be again, to that element of profound serenity in the soul of her Founder which reflected the eternal good-will of God to man, 'in whom' according to the oldest version of the angelic message, 'He is well-pleased'".*

Marius sensed in it the urbane ideal of culture, of defining the path of humanism. Abandoning the fanaticism of its earlier and more tempestuous days, the Roman Church had already reached a maturity which was reflected in a more graceful and less ascetic faith which permitted the flourishing of the very ideal which Marius had come to cherish since he abandoned Cyrenaicism with its suppression of "a thousand sympathies"--the ideal of the "harmonious development of all parts of human nature, in just proportion to each other."

Mr. Paul Elmer More, of an austere mind which makes him not the most sympathetic critic of Pater, believes the Christianity of Montanism is nearer the real Christianity of the second century than "the sweet voluptousness of religion as it appeared to Marius".** It is better for one unversed in ecclesiastical history, it appears to me, to dodge the question at issue, than to attempt an interpretation of the spirit of Christianity in 200 A.D. Whether Pater was wrong in his interpretation of history or no, certain it is that there is no anachronism in the serenity and urbanity of the spirit

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* Ibid. II p.126.
** Paul E. More, The Drift of Romanticism. N.Y.1913. p.95.

of the Church as viewed through Marius' temperament. And if there were discordant currents in the religion of the times, it is but natural that Marius, romantic and intensely subjective, should see the Church standing as a symbol for commen-sense, fairness, and naturalness, and the bishops of Rome, with a catholicity transcending dogma, defining the true path of humanism.

Marius went, one early morning to the villa of Cecilia in search of Cornelius, and became a witness of the celebration of the Eucharist. The experience satisfied his passion for worship as it had never been satisfied before. The whole atmosphere of the ceremony, so far as it concerned Marius, was saturated in the romantic glow of ritual, liturgy, mysticism. The character of the pontiff was composed of "the expression, the manner and voice,...as he took his seat on the white chair..." The long staff, badge of his office, seemed to exert a strange mesmeric power over the imagination of Marius,--and the moving hands, "hands which seemed endowed in very deed with some mysterious power", seemed to fascinate him with their languid gesture. And he observed ecstatically the "chanting in cadence of a grave sweetness the leading parts of the rite. What profound unction and mysticity!"

What a profound distillation of the essence of Paterism, one might remark. The "passion for worship" satisfied in Marius was more sensuous, exquisitely attenuated, than any religious faith--a conscious, artistic refinement of emotion finely drawn and <u>aesthet-icised</u>, a temperament pursuing its own shadow in the purlieus of Gethsemane.

Indeed, one feels that it would not be far wrong to say that the humanism of the Roman Church militant, the urbane catholicity of her adherents, as Pater represented them, were not so much the

sign of the times as of Pater's own insurmountable subjectivity. The aesthetic romanticism of the blithe bishops arose, as a matter of fact, from the same cult of cheer as that which was to produce twenty years later the facilely philosophical, blithe pagan in evening clothes.

At this point a long dialogue is introduced between Lucian, the satirist, and young Hermotimus. Like the adaptation from Apuleius' Golden Book it is a rare piece of literature in itself, but it frays badly the slender thread of the narrative. Hermotimus is an enthusiastic young student of philosophy, earnest, blushing, modestly ingenu. The substance of the dialogue is made up of Platonic philosophy, interpreted by Pater, and the upshot of the talk is "that the adoption of any form of philosophic belief is dictated by a preference and an instinct in the disciple."

There follow a series of incidents which Marius had recorded in his diary, all of which were designed to play upon the emotions of pity and sympathy; a wounded racehorse lead to slaughter, a young peasant woman and her husband bringing a toil-worn and broken old mother to a house provided for afflicted people, a delicate child bathed in the dust of a brick furnace, "regarding wistfully his own place in the world, there before him", a little girl playing blithely with her hopelessly crippled brother, happily unaware of the tragedy which must enter their lives when lovers come for her, while the even monotony of his existence drags dully on. In reviewing such incidents ad these, Marius finds that he has failed in love and human charity in shutting himself into a life of meditation. "I would that a stronger love might arise in my heart!", he cries.

It is intimated at various points that Marius cherished a more than brotherly love for Cecilia. Yet he kept his passion re-

markably well curbed:

> "It had always been his policy, through all his pursuit of 'experience', to take flight in time from any too disturbing passion, from any sort of affection likely to quicken his pulses beyond the point at which the quiet work of life was practicable." *

It is fortunate for the lady that she entertained no reciprocal affection. It would surely have seemed to her that he was almost too much the master of his turbulent emotions! As a matter of fact, one feels that there is something lacking in a man so well disciplined. Such calm sureness is not far removed from complacency and smugness. Marius managed to attain a kind of detachment, in which he could view his own emotion objectively. It became for him a thing delicately touched with poetry, whose ebb and flow he could watch with the exquisite pleasure of a connoiseur, like "another man's story, or a picture on the wall".

The following spring Marius ventured to hear the Easter ceremonies, at which were read the "Epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienne". They told of persecutions and martyrdoms, instigated by Marcus Aurelius.

The impression that he had gained before, that the new religion seemed to breathe a new daring hope, was again borne upon him. Indeed, such was its buoyancy, that it seemed to attain its greatest effulgence in the presence of death, and in a high solemn ecstacy transcend the mysterious passage from this world to the next.

Marius saw the emperor's return to Rome from the northern wars, with a great crowd of captives, much plunder, and various pic-

* Marius. II. p.206.

turesque examples of the fauna of theGerman forests. Marius thought of the procession as revealing the same old program to which the human drama had always adhered; the mediocrity of people, and the vulgarity, rapacity, and lust for spoilage of men and nations. His reaction to the florid procession was so intense that "Aurelius himself seemed to have undergone the world's coinage, and fallen to the level of his reward, in a mediocrity no longer golden".

He set out for his old home immediately, vaguely depressed with the thought that he was the last of his race! Feeling that no one would ever approach the spot sacred to his dead in quite the same spirit of high reverence that was his, he opened the family mausoleum, and buried the family remains so that the memory should be only his, and "would claim no sentiment from the indifferent."

For the rest of the history of Marius the narrative takes on a dramatic quality. The end comes abruptly. Marius and Cornelius are pursuing a leisurely journey toward Rome. An earthquake shakes severely a village in which they are staying overnight. The suspicion of the inhabitants is turned upon the Christians as having called down the wrath of the gods upon them. A melee follows in which both Marius and Cornelius are taken prisoner. Marius promptly takes advantage of the venality of the guards to procure the release of Cornelius whom he sends on ahead to make arrangements for his defense. It is a thoroughly generous action. He knows well that in remaining he is exposing himself to discomfort, danger, possibly death. And not the least of his pleasures in the days that ensue is the wistful joy of contemplating the robust moral courage of the act.

It was the time of the autumnal equinox. The slow journey toward Rome was accomplished under repeated drenchings. The exposure, the rough food, and the utter weariness of the journey made their

impression upon the somewhat frail physique of Marius, and on the fifth day the soldiers, unwilling to be hampered by a prisoner who appeared to be about to die, left him in the kindly hands of some amiable country folk.

Here in a lowly hut he lay, alternately racked by fever, and cheered by a strange rejuvenation of his faculties. It was the eerie, febrile sharpness of perception whose import is most ominous, that last bright flare-up of the life-force. With a strange agility of mind, and with unusual clarity, Marius retraced the path of his spiritual quest, coupled with the intuitive perception of "the scattered fragments of a poetry, till then but half-understood", which "might be taken up into the text of a lost epic, recovered at last."

> "At this moment, his unclouded receptivity of soul, grown steadily through all those years, from experience to experience, was at its height; the house ready for the possible guest; the tablet of the mind white and smooth for whatsoever divine fingers might choose to write there. And was not this precisely the condition, the attitude of mind, to which something higher than he, yet akin to him, would be likely to reveal itself; to which that influence he had felt now and again, like a friendly hand upon his shoulder amid the actual obscurities of the world, would be likely to make a further explanation? Surely, the aim of a true philosophy must lie, not in futile efforts towards the complete accommodation of man to the circumstances in which he chances to find himself, but in the maintenance of a kind of

candid discontent, in the face of the very highest achievement, the unclouded and receptive soul quitting the world finally, with the same fresh wonder with which it had entered the world still unimpaired, and going on its blind way at last with the consciousness of some profound enigma in things, as but a pledge of something further to come. Marius seemed to understand how one might look back upon life here, and its excellent visions, as but the portion of a racecourse left behind him by a runner still swift of foot; for a moment, he experienced a singular curiosity, almost a desire to enter upon a future, the possibilities of which seemed so large."*

The quotation is lengthy, but important. It indicates the final position reached by Marius. Like a second Moses, he was given just a fleeting, distant glimpse into the promised land. He sank into weariness in which impressions came to him intermittently and hazily. In this gentle way he died, while the people gathered around his bed and applied reverently the sacrament of Extreme Unction, "holding his death, according to their generous views in this matter, to have been of the nature of a martyrdom, and martyrdom, as the church had always said, a kind of sacrament with plenary grace."

The abrupt inconclusive ending of a quest pursued so faithfully holds something deeply tragic in it, as M. Laurent saw as he wrote of Marius' death:

"Ainsi disparait sans foi definitive sans souvenir meme d'avoir possede jamais la verite, l'ombre que

* Marius. II. pp.241-242.

> fut Marius sur la terre. Son evolution avait ete tout interieure, remarque-t-il un jour avec tristesse. Sa vie s'etait ecoulee a prendre des attitudes a se fixer, a vouloir desesperement s'attacher, et le monde, plus fort, avait tout entraine dans son tourbillon."*

Through all his life, Marius felt the two dominant strains of his nature at war within him; an exquisite love for corporeal beauty, and a high sensitivity to the aesthetic appeal of ecclesiastical symbol and the dogma of theology. As Edmund Gosse said of his author, Pater: "He was not all for Apollo, nor all for Christ."

There are certain disadvantages to be observed in the excessive finish of Pater's style. The periods are long-drawn and harmonious, but lacking the vigor and incisiveness often found in the very roughness of less carefully manipulated work. In the excessive polish there is often to be detected a languor, a faintness and softness which falls unwelcome on the alien ear, a cloudiness of outline that is not merely stylistic, but inherent in the romantic, poetical temperament of Pater.

Take, for example, an excerpt from Marius' diary:

> "How little I myself really need, when people leave me alone, with the intellectual powers at work serenely. The drops of falling water, a few wild flowers with their priceless fragrance, a few tufts even of half-dead leaves, changing color in the quiet of a room that has but light and shadow in it; these, for a susceptible mind, might well do duty for all the glory of Augustus."**

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* Laurent. p.204
** Marius. II-p.198

This suggests to mind the wan Mr. Rose of Mallock's New Republic who remarked "when I go to ugly houses, I often take a scrap of some artistic cretonne with me in my pocker as a kind of aesthetic smelling salts," and whose imagination was all compact of Laconian maidens dancing in white tulle, ruined temples, rainbows, the lust of Rome, the poisonous secrets of the Italian Renaissance, and the pleasant shimmering of white limbs in clear water. In this direction lie "mistresses and pythons, cameos and sphinxes."

Yet despite the "sort of golden haze of pensive light" in which Marius moves, a haze insisted upon in the frequent introduction of a conventional phrase indicative of Marius' "musing" such as 'As he viewed the experience in reprospect, it seemed to Marius', and 'As he looked back upon his impressions, Marius found himself', there is a wealth of concrete detail in the book. If it is unreal, it has at the same time, an air of verity in its intimate, accurate, and sensitive descriptions of nature, and the faithful arrangement of archeological elements. Pater had a certain trick of writing vividly of things he had never seen, or had but glanced at. "He was always at his best when he was amplifying slender hints, and recollected glimpses."

Yet Pater was not a great creative artist. Even though one gives the admission a wide and generous scope that criticism of Marius which points out what it is not, points out simultaneously what it is not supposed to be, and that in its attainment of the end in view it is a monument of literature, there is no escaping M. Laurent's remark in this connection:

"On aurait pu croire que Pater, mis in contact avec tant de richesses artistiques et tant d' invention, a son tour creerait des contes Bab-

uleux ou des drames."

He adds significantly, "Il n'en fut rien".

CHAPTER III

THE "IMAGINARY PORTRAITS"

The "Imaginary Portraits" and certain essays from other volumes which are conceived in the same mood, constitute a special division of Pater's writings, and one which has a special interest because it falls in so closely, we may thing, with some of the peculiarities of the writer's own temperament. Of his method, it may be said in general that Pater here attempts to place an individual drawn from history, as in the paper on Antony Watteau, or from the imagination, as in "Denys L'Auxerrois" in the environment from which he sprang, and, using the same deft imaginative touch with which he exposed the life of ancient Greece in the Greek Studies, to build up on whatever hints he can find, the psychology of an individual.

There is a significance in the characters he finds attractive. They are invariably types of discontent, unrest; men, frequently with pathological peculiarities, who seem to find something lacking in their own world, or some vague yearning in themselves which unfits them for saying "yea" to the universe.

First of the essays is "A Prince of Court Painters", Antony Watteau. The essay, with a narrative and dramatic quality quite distinctive among Pater's works, is cast in the form of the diary of a jeune fille of Valenciennes. Here perhaps better than anywhere else Pater succeeds in escaping from himself. But he is never wholly successful. And the faint suggestion of Pater's own character which still clings to the grave, serious-minded young diarist (as we may imagine her!) gives a most attractive air, the grace of an unexpected maturity in observation, an air of restraint which

mingles oddly with the fresh naievete of the young girl, and flavors delightfully her tender but pungent comment on the life about her.

She and the young Watteau have grown up together in the quiet old-fashioned town. She interests herself in the budding talent of the youth, exhibiting the quiet solicitude which one observes so often in young girls ad a kind of foreshadowing of the maternal instinct. Then quite suddenly, the opportunity comes for Antony to pursue his fortune at Paris. The diarist writes:

> "He doesn't know that it was I who persuaded the scene painter to take him; that he would find the lad useful. We offered him our little presents--fine thread-lace of our own making for his ruffles, and the like; for one must make a figure in Paris, and he is slim and well-formed."

There is here what we may feel suggested at other points in the sketch, behind the reserved young dignity of the remark, the intimation of an emotion carefully concealed, which would quite transcend the bounds of friendship, could we but plumb it. As the essay progresses there comes the same suspicion at divers points, but the hint is never elaborated; rather, firmly repressed,--which may be as characteristic of Pater as it was of the little girl of Valenciennes.

Watteau prospered famously at court. He bore the title of Peintre des Fetes Galantes and Peintre du Roi. The soul of the gentle writer is fired with optimism and enthusiasm and gratitude when the artist consents to take her small brother Jean-Baptiste as pupil. But a year and a half later the boy comes home--dismissed! The reason is not apparent at the time; possibly caprice, or a feeling on

the part of Watteau that the youth was lacking in talent.

Occasionally the girl becomes a mere convention, to be dropped easily while Pater himself speaks forth on the serious business of the paper. At least, it would be an extraordinary jeune fille, who could express so well the elusive individual quality in Watteau's work, -

> "That charming Noblesse--can it be really so distinguished to the minutest point, so naturally aristocratic? Half in masquerade, playing the drawing-room or garden comedy of life, these persons have upon them, not less than the landscape he composes, and among the accidents of which they group themselves with such a perfect fittingness, a certain light we should seek for in vain upon anything real."

Her analysis of the character of the man is no less penetrating, sharpened perhaps by that intuitive feminine insight which we are accustomed to think of as piercing to the centre of character, when the heart is engaged. Watteau, born in the mosy humble state, could not but have felt the fascination of the gay, graceful society which embraced him as a welcome, highly desirable ornament. Yet a vanity fed to satiety upon adulation does not make for happiness, as Watteau found out speedily enough. He seemed always to be reaching out, dissatisfied with his life as he lived it, his attainments, himself; bearing on in a vain quest, "always a seeker after something in the world that is there in no satisfying measure, or not at all."

In "Denys L'Auxerrois", a strictly imaginative piece of work, the story is told of a wild, mysterious, mad young pagan and his life and death in the medieval town of Auxerre. The raconteur is a

traveller in France who discovers the strange, curiously fascinating theme of Denys' influence in Auxerre in an old tapestry which a priest shows him. So far as he could make out it dealt with the building of the cathedral of Saint Etienne, towards the middle of the thirteenth century, when the cathedral was nearly complete, the main incident of the tapestry being the building of an organ.

There seems to be in the tapestry a wild Bacchic license, "giddy dances, wild animals leaping, above all perpetual wreathings of the vine, connecting, like some mazy arabesque, the various presentations of one oft-repeated figure,...that of the organ builder himself, a flaxen and flowery creature, sometimes well nigh naked among the vineleaves, sometimes muffled in skins against the cold, sometimes in the dress of a monk, but always with a strong impress of real character and incident from the veritable streets of Auxerre." For all its free pagan beauty, the figure gives him the feeling that it is suffering some malicious, strange torture.

Pater then sets out to create from his own fancy the story of the figure in the tapestry, Denys of Auxerre. He was rumoured to be the natural son of a former count of Auxerre. He had lived with his maternal relatives in the most humble circumstances, keeping, in fact, a stall in the market-place of the town. Yet his nearness to the people, his constant association with them, had never made him one of them. He had a superior, magnetic personality, that drew his fellow-townsmen to him. But they seemed to feel something sinister, at times, even when the attraction he exerted was most powerful. His influence over the young men of the town, falling in with the political temper of the times produced a most singular unrest, "a wild social license, which for a while made life like a stage-play."

There was an uncanny quality in his presence which gradually aroused the suspicion of the people. He cultivated a fondness for misshapen children; he maintained as a companion a half-tamed wolf. He had, too, strange fears,--an inordinate horror of the owl. He disappeared for long periods and then re-appeared in a startling, inexplicable way. After one of these pilgrimages (in this instance it had been to Marseliies where he had obtained from the sailors many delightful wares from the Indes and Persia) his nature seemed to undergo a malignant change. He became even more feared and hated by the people. Strange things happened. A kind of madness seemed to possess the people. Even nature seemed to be perverted by his evil genius, and the former sunny vineyards were bathed all summer in cold rain.

Goaded by the fear that sits ever near the hearts of simple and primitive people, his fellow-townsmen attempted to kill Denys as a sorceror. He escaped their malevolence miraculously, lying in hiding in his early cottage home. At this time the clergy bethought them of the body of a patron saint which had lain long neglected, and which they promptly exhumed and arranged to enshrine richly, that they might avert the vicissitudes which threatened to overwhelm them.

Denys was quietly received by the monks who still labored on the cathedral because of his manual skill and "exquisite fancy" which lent itself well to the decoration of the church. Denys designed the new organ too, for, "like the Wine-god of old, he had been a lover and patron especially of the music of the pipe."

Gradually the memory of the peoples' animosity and fierce distrust faded in the mind of Denys, and on a day of ceremony for the whole town--it was the occasion of the blessing of the foundation of a new bridge by the bishop--he ventured forth to witness the event.

Suddenly he was reminded of his plight when he felt the eyes of the crowd on him, full of a curious "strange humour", an insidious, half-veiled threat. He leaped into the water, and again escaped, no one knew how.

There came a time when the townspeople prepared a popular pageant, similar to an earlier one, the Return from the East in which he had played the leading part. Seized, perhaps, with one of the intermittent fits of madness with which he had always been afflicted, and which came on him now with greater frequency, he conceived the idea of winning back his popularity by appearing in his former role, in monk's dress.

> "Hastily he donned the ashen-grey mantle, the rough haircloth about the throat, and went through the preliminary matter. And it happened that a point of the haircloth scratched his lip deeply, with a long trickling of blood upon the chin. It was as if the sight of blood transported the spectators with a kind of mad rage, and suddenly revealed to them the truth. The pretended hunting of the unholy creature became a real one, which brought out, in rapid increase, men's evil passions. The soul of Denys was already at rest, as his body, now borne along in front of the crowd, was tossed hither and thither, torn at last limb from limb. The men stuck little shreds of his flesh, or failing that, of his torn raiment, into their caps; the women lending their long hairpins for the purpose."

We have here an imaginative creation in which, as Benson says, "the fancy seems to struggle and trample with a strange self-born fury, as though it had taken the bit in its teeth, and was with difficulty over-mastered." It is different from the other papers, but a difference in degree, not in kind; all the elements, the pagan, the strange, romantic charm of the medieval, the aesthetic spectacle of the whole story, the luxurious revelling in the strange, misty beauty of antiquity, are always characteristic of Pater. Here, for once, his temperate, disciplined mind seems to have slipped the lease. The prominent qualities and incidents of the story are all typical of that later school which claimed to have derived legitimately from Pater, and which aroused aesthetic pleasure from the cultivation of "strangeness and beauty", the excitation of emotion, the stimulus of imagination, through the portrayal of the strange, romantic, gruesome, and sensuous. For example: the strange character of Denys, compounded of gentleness and cruelty, and never quite revealed in all its constituent parts; his fits of inexplicable frenzy; the picture of the bishop's red-gloved hands drawing from the little coffin the wasted body of the saint; the incident of the finding of the body of the child's skeleton in the foundation of the old Roman bridge; the memorable scene of the mad Denys plunging his mattock into the mouldering bones of the graveyard in insane delight; and the final scene of his death, with all its horrible details. The essay undoubtedly would have been accepted as the authentic production of its own group by the Yellow Book or the Savoy Magazine.

"Sebastian Van Storck" is a dtudy of a man of brilliant intellectual gifts, great attractiveness of person, of impeccable social standing, and, to top it all, extremely wealthy, who embarks upon the frigid sea of philosophy at just that age when the expansive

tendency is ordinarily urging youth into the world with a vigorous enthusiasm for activity and conquest. But Sebastian was "like one disembarrassing himself of all impediments, habituating himself gradually to make shift with as little as possible, in preparation for a long journey." In his passion for intellectual clearness, he came to shrink from all that was positive, evaluating the results of his observation from the vantage point of utter detachment. His speculations upon the universe lead him into a subjective mood, the belief that after all, whatever certitude the phenomenal world had for him could only be established and maintained through his own states of consciousness. He thought of the world "as being zero without him." Having taken this view, the valadity of his thoughts became of eminent importance. And so his passion for attaining to pure reason, in his power of thought.

> "All was but conscious mind. Therefore, all the more exclusively, he must minister to mind, to the intellectual power, whithersoever it might lead him. Everything must be referred to, and, as it were, changed into the terms of that, if its essential value was to be ascertained."

A fanatical doctrine turns upon itself if allowed to run its course unrestrained, and we find that the philosophy of Sebastian from which he had extracted all touch of humanity and personality, reacted upon him with a sort of ironical truth.

> "At first, indeed, he had a kind of delight in his thoughts--in the eager pressure forward, to whatsoever conclusion, of a rigid intellectual

> gymnastic, which was like the making of Euclid. Only, little by little, under the freezing influence of such propositions, the theoretic energy itself, and with it his old eagerness for truth, the care to track it from proposition to proposition, was chilled out of him."

Sebastian finds himself being drawn into an intimacy with a girl whose warmth and color repulse him less than any force which has ever acted upon him from without. All the friends of the two families concerned are expecting momentarily an announcement of engagement. Sebastian is trembling in the balance. At this time the lady exhibits a natural touch of feminine coquetry (being, in the common phrase, sure of him!) which shocks every fibre of his pallid temperament. He finds something coarse about it, something he would fly from, something which makes further sight of the girl all but repulsive.

Leaving for her a note of unfortunate brevity and coldness, he leaves for an old property of the family near the sea, where he may find lodging and solitude. The dikes give way under the buffetting of a fourteen days wind and rain, and the whole district is inundated. The body of Sebastian is found later, a child asleep "swaddled in his heavy furs."

The thought which Pater would seem to have enforced here is that the life totally disinterested is profitless and based upon a fallacy, neglecting to take into account, as Pater himself points out, that an unmitigated devotion to formal logic, the nomination upon the ultimate conditions of existence, is an activity which could never have brought the world to its present state. Sebastian

never reflected that it never could have evolved himself and the curious nihilism of which he was actually proud, had all mankind spent its purest energies in the contemplation of the ineffable. And more than that, the peculiar tragic end of Sebastian, drowned to save the life of a baby, indicates poignantly the futility of attempting to escape.

"Duke Carl of Rosenmold", last of the Imaginary Portraits, is a subtle analysis of the temperament of the young heir of a German grand duchy. It was the time when Germany, still in the lethargy of the middle ages, had been far outdistanced by all her neighbors in the arts and in litarature. Even in national feeling theGermans were backward. While other nations were growing in power and homogeneity, Germany was still devoid of national consciousness. But the spell was breaking. There was a restless spirit abroad, as yet appearing only at isolated localities, but slowly and surely evolving a group consciousness which was to sweep onward with the fairest promise of success toward the goal of a national art and literature. It was such individuals as the young Duke Carl, fired with enthusiasm for all things Greek, looking with envy on the intellectual development of France and Italy, yet filled with love and hope for the father-land, who became the fore-runners of Lessing and Herder, and prepared the way for the German Renaissance.

"To bring Apollo with his lyre to Germany!" That was the constant dream of Carl, and those who, like him, had caught fire from the flame of Hellas.

The old Grand-duke, grandfather of Carl, had reached a fond and timorous old age in which he was willing to give free rein to the whims of the enthusiastic young man. And so with a warm passion for what he conceived to be the beautiful, but with questionable taste,

at times, in his choice, Carl investigated and tried to absorb appreciatively all he came in contact with in art, music, architecture, drama, poetry. In this almost feverish activity there was little stability or balance. We read without surprise that "the people in actual contact with him thought him a little mad though still ready to flatter his madness, as he could detect."

When even his closest friends hailed him as the Apollo of Germany, he wearied of all flattery. He did not relapse into the cynicism which would have taken possession of one of a less volatile and more reflective disposition in an atmosphere so surcharged with insincerity, but rather turned his agile mind to some trick or subterfuge to test the affection of his court, and reveal all the posing and affectation of which he was the centre. He hit upon the familiar device of announcing his own death. The affair is carried through with great magnificence, Carl being present at the funeral ceremonies in disguise. Immediately after the obsequisies Carl left on the dilatory travels of which he had dreamed so long.

He was in the Swiss Alps when the melancholy news came of the Grand-duke's taking off. He made all speed for Ronsemold. An incident of his return to the life there was a meeting with a girl of peasant origin, who appeared to be waiting for him meekly at just the point where she had wept in true affection at the passing of his bier. Duke Carl suddenly determined to marry her, though we may suspect no more through real affection than the pleasant conscicusness involved in doing the fantastic, quixotic thing. Carl arrange a secret, intimate meeting at a remote hunting-lodge. As it happened, a great army was passing through Rosenmold at the time. In some mysterious way it engulfed the lodge and its occupants in its onward sweep. At least the lovers were never again heard of, and we may

imagine it as being at once their nuptial night and the night of their death.

Carl was a type possessing rare impressibility, with a distinct genius for rendering honorable service in the great task he dreamed of,--the awakening of Germany. But his essential instability, which indicated an actually abnormal or unbalanced mind, made every effort abortive. Like that of Watteau, Denys, and Sebastian, his is an incomplete life, one of unsatisfied desires and frustrated ambitions, the frustration arising not from fate, environment, or adverse circumstance, but in each case from some psychological defect in the individual.

Mr. A. C. Benson, in his Walter Pater, groups two other essays, "Emerald Uthwart" and "Apollo in Picardy" with the Imaginary Portraits because, as he remarks, they fit naturally into the same series. It may be convenient to follow his arrangement here.

In"Apollo in Picardy" recurrs a favorite idea of Pater's, the coming of a pagan deity to a Christian and alien land. Prior Saint-Jean was engaged upon an abstruse and scholarly treatise, when the Abbot, solicitous for his health, which he had taxed severely in his prolonged sedentary occupation, sent him to the Grange of the monastery to superintend the building of a large barn, accompanied by Hyacinthus, a boy of the monastery with winsome and pleasing graces, who was an inseparable companion of the Prior.

One night Prior Saint-Jean discovered a serf asleep. It was a youth, a most extraordinary creature, with a strange, distinctive beauty which recalls Denys to mind. And like Denys, he possessed peculiar powers. It soon appeared to the Prior that this serf exerted steadily a most fascinating, compelling influence in the daily life of the Grange. His feats of strength were proverbial,

despite his slender form. He could evoke soft and compelling music from his harp, so that the workmen were content to labor far into the night on the new barns, joining in unbidden at times when the music reached them clearly. He possessed an attraction for wild things. He caressed birds, which flew to him as by instinct; then killed them ruthlessly. One night the pigeon-house was invaded and the next morning the floor was littered with dead broken birds. It was strange too that the serf, Apollyon, was most meek and penitent thereafter, and interested himself in holy exercised with an eager devotion quite foreign to his usual disposition.

A strange kind of madness, which was someway felt to emanate from Apollyon, had seized upon the Prior Saint-Jean. His memory became faulty. He was driven to frenzy by optical illusions. Halos flitted capriciously before his eyes. He found with amizement that he was crowding his treatise with bizarre drawings; "winged flowers, or stars with human limbs and faces, still intruding themselves, or mere notes of light and darkness from the actual horizon."

The boy Hyacinthus seemed to distrust intuitively the source of the malicious influence, and the two, monkish youth and pagan, found themselves divided over the disposition of the Prior; the former insistently desiring to remove him to the monastery proper, the latter exerting his influence that the Prior stay on at the Grange.

But their play was not wholly interrupted. Hyacinthus unearthed one day a quoit or discus from the debris of a newly dug grave, and when evening came, the two played together, hurling it over the moonlit turf in tense and suppressed excitement. They cast aside their clothes in the heat of the game, for the sake of coolness and freedom of movement. As the story approaches the climax, it is most effectively told, as Pater tells it, in the present tense.

> "Under the overcast sky it is in darkness they are playing, by guess and touch chiefly; and suddenly an icy blast of wind has lifted the roof from the old chapel, the trees are moaning in wild circular motion, and their devil's penny-piece, when Apollyon throws it for the last time, is itself but a twirling leaf in the wind, till it sinks edgewise, sawing through the boy's face, uplifted in the dark to trace it, crushing in the tender skull upon the brain."

Apollyon flees, and the distraught Prior Saint-Jean is found bending over the stricken body of Hyacinthus. Apollyon departed the next day leaving the Prior suspected of murder. He was held prisoner in the monastery, gazing out at the valley of the monastery the rest of his days, tormented by wistful, crowding, incoherent desires. Permission for his release was granted just as he died.

"Apollo in Picardy" suffers, as do all the fantastic sketches which depend somewhat for their effect upon incident, from the total absence of the dramatic gift in Pater's equipment, and from his studie style, whose complex involutions are the enemy of the dramatic touch in characterization. It has the same romantic half-light in which Denys L'Auxerrois moves, relieved shockingly we may feel sometimes, as in the stark realism with which the death of Hyacinthus is set forth.

In "Emerald Uthwart" Pater turns from Picardy to Sussex for his locale. "The motif of the story", says Benson, "is to depict a certain type of Englishman, a type of decorous submissiveness. "Emerald is thoroughly English in his origins, the life and environment being set forth with great charm and real sympathy, for

Pater was English in his affections, no matter how his mind yearned toward the pagan deities of Olumpus, or the white porticos of Athens, or the decaying campagna of imperial Rome.

The Uthwarts were a quiet, self-sufficient people, with great sincereity of character and no affectation in their manner of life. "Centuries of 'still' life--of birth, death, and the rest, as merely natural processes--had made them and their home what we find them."

At school Emerald forms a friendship with James Stokes, with whom he goes up to Oxford. Here the humility he had always shown developed into a distinctive quality of character. "Submissiveness!--It had the force of life-long genius with Emerald Uthwart." So much so is he dominated by this idea that he often seems merely weak and complaisant, so that "in the bustle of school life he did not count even with those who knew him best, with those who taught him, for the intellectual capacity he really had."

Yet withal, there was a distinct charm to his personality.

> "Strangers' eyes, resting on him by chance, are deterred for a while, even among the rich sights of the venerable place, as he walks out and in, in his prim gown and purple tasselled cap; goes in, with the stream of sunlight, through the black shadows of the mouldering Gothic gateway, like youth's very self, eternal, immemorial, eternally renewed, about those immemorially ancient stones. 'Young Apollo!' people say--people who have pigeon-holes for their impressions, watching the slim, trim figure with the exercise books. His very dress seems touched with Hellenic fitness to the healthy youthful form."

The two friends entered the army, and in their novitiate showed great promise, because of the intelligence and address with which they performed their military duties. They were engaged in a campaign in Flanders when the event occurred which precipitated the tragedy of their lives - "an act of thoughtless bravery, almost the sole irregular or undisciplined act of Uthwart's life, he still following his senior--criminal however to the military conscience, under the actual circumstances, and in the enemy's country."

The army, it seems, had been idle for some time. We can readily understand the ennui which afflicted such impatient, eager youths as Uthwart and Stokes, and the ingenuity which they doubtless would devote to dispelling the lethargy of long inactivity.

They embark, accordingly, taking advantage of a certain vague phrase in their instructions, upon an expedition whose aim is to enter the town which lay before them, the object of the mission being obscurely indicated,--only an old weather-beaten flag, sofar as we can learn. The sortie is accomplished successfully, with a relaxation of spirit and zest of adventure which must have rewarded them richly with "the intensely pleasant, the glorious sense of movement renewed once more."

But their command has moved on. They find themselves held as deserters in the eyes of the military court which is called to sit in judgement on them. They are both sentenced to death. Here the story is cast in the form of the diary of one who witnessed the execution, told with a realism almost too faithful. At the last minute Emerald Uthwart's sentence is commuted to dismissal from the army in disgrace. After a long roundabout journey he returned to the place of his birth, where he lived, pensively, a life apart, for two or three years, until he fell ill of an old wound--"his old glorious

wound", as he thought of it,--and died quietly. He had before him at his last moments a letter offering him a commission in the British army, constituting, as a nice piece of dramatic justice, his final vindication before the world.

CHAPTER IV

THE "GREEK STUDIES"

The full and intelligent appreciation of the Greek Studies would demand a fund of classical erudition such as only the scholar possesses, so I shall content myself with indicating the material which they contain and a few suggestions as to what Pater's treatment of his subject matter may mean in the philosophy of Pater himself. The subject itself is always likely to be a fruitful one, because it is in his attitude towards Hellenic culture that the humanist always defines himself most sharply.

The essays fall into two groups, treating Greek mythology and poetry, and Greek sculpture and architecture. The first essay takes for its subject the religion of Dionysus, "occupying a place between the ruder fancies of half civilized people concerning life in flower or tree, and the dreamy after-fancies of the poet of the Sensitive Plant," whose "graceful worship" came to mean for the people "all that life in flowing things of which the vine is the symbol."

The religion of Dionysus as "a complete sacred representation and interpretation of the whole of life" was the outgrowth of an attitude towards the world, frequent in Hellenic thought, in which life was thought of as being a ceaseless ebb and flux, yet with a curious continuity and affinity, which attempted, with a characteristic passion for the symbol, to crowd into the narrow limits of the human form, "the impressions of natural things",--"to retain that early mystical sense of water, or wind, or light, in the moulding of eye and brow; to arrest it, or rather, perhaps, to set it free, there, as human expression." Dionysus became then the god of the

music of the water-reed, and the flowing vine,--"the spiritual form of fire and dew."

Like Persephone, Dionysus "opens the hope of a possible analogy between the resurrection of nature and something else, as yet unrealized," and so the perpetual death and rebirth of Dionysus becomes "an emblem or ideal of chastening and purification", steadily illuminating to the moral nature.

In the "Bacchanals of Euripides" Pater discusses the treatment of the same theme in Greek drama. The story here is of Dionysus and the rebellious women of Thebes. For it seems to have been women who were most susceptible to the subtle influence of the Dionyssic worship,--"those who experience most directly the influence of things which touch thought through the senses--the presence of night, the expectation of morning, the nearness of wild, unsophisticated, natural things,--the echoes, the coolness, the noise of frightened creatures as they climbed through the darkness, the sunrise seen from the hilltops, the disillusion, the bitterness of satiety, the deep slumber which comes with the morning."

The ancient myth of Demeter and Persephone, whose central expression occured as early as 600 B.C., is traced from its origins in the essay, "Demeter and Persephone." Pater follows the legend through three phases, which may be taken as characteristic of all similar mythological stories which exerted any considerable influence in Greek religion or ethics; the first, in which the story was perpetuated verbally; the second, in which the poets seized upon the story, limiting and expanding it so as to develop most fully its literary possibilities; and lastly, when"the incidents of the poetical narrative are realized as abstract symbols," which bear some

moral or ethical character in themselves. Demeter is the type of divine grief. Persephone, while the goddess of death, carries nevertheless, like Dionysus, the promise of resurrection. And these cosmical stories, antedating even the pagan animistic sentiment towards nature in which there was a spirit of the earth and sky, and a naive personification of trees and streams, and certain places were even deemed to have their patron spirit, or genius, "stood to the primitive intelligence in place of such metaphysical conceptions" as the later animism, or the modern scientific conception of nature, in which mechanics have so completely displaced the poetic or instinctive feeling.

The spirit of sadness has frequently been considered as foreign to the Greek temperament, melancholy being associated more intimately with the romantic mood. Pater shows from the legend of Demeter and Persephone that this is only a partial conception.

> "The 'worship of sorrow', as Goethe called it, is sometimes supposed to have had almost no place in the religion of the Greeks. Their religion has been represented as a religion of mere cheerfulness, the worship by an untroubled, unreflecting humanity, conscious of no deeper needs, of the embodiments of its own joyous activity. It helped to hide out of their sight those traces of decay and weariness, of which the Greeks were constitutionally shy, to keep them from peeping too curiously into certain shadowy places, appropriate enough to the gloomy imagination of the middle age; and it hardly proposed to itself to give consolation to people who, in truth,

were never 'sick or sorry'".

The second phase of the myth, conceived in "a conscious literary temper", shows the story humanized, "its subject...the mater dolorosa of the ancient world", which in turn developed into the third phase, whose function it was to give "visible aesthetic expression" to the ideal conceptions embodied in Demeter the divine sorrowing mother, and Persephone, the goddess of death, and the final image of Demeter enthroned, chastened by sorrow, and somewhat advanced in age, blessing the earth in her joy at the return of Kore." (Persephone)

Such legends are not theology. Nor are they any kind of formalized result of speculation upon the religious aspects of the phenomenal world. They must be viewed as poetry. And it is as poetry that they preserve their attractiveness for the modern mind,--together with a certain solemnizing influence because of our memory of their power in an age which has always possessed a strong allure for the humanist.

> "There is an attractiveness in these goddesses of the earth, akin to the influence of cool places, quiet houses, subdued light, tranquillising voices. What is there in this phase of ancient religion for us, at the present day? The myth of Demeter and Persephone, then, illustrates the power of the Greek religion as a religion of pure ideas--of conceptions, which having no link on historical fact, yet, because they arose naturally out of the spirit of man, and embodied, in adequate sympols, his deepest thoughts concerning the conditions of his physical and spiritual life, maintained their hold through many

changes, and are still not without a solemnising power even for the modern mind, which has once admitted them as recognised and habitual inhabitants; and, abiding thus for the elevation and purifying of our sentiments, long after the earlier and simpler races of their worshippers have passed away, they may be a pledge to us of the place in our culture, at once legitimate and possible, of the associations, the conceptions, the imagery, of Greek religious poetry in general, of the poetry of all religions."

"Hippolytus Veiled", identified as "a study from Euripides", is the story of the live-child of Theseus and an Amazon who, alone and un-husbanded, nourishes and trains the youth in a life, simple, frugal, chaste. As one schooled in a mental and physical temperance which almost approaches severity, he passes on into the world where he wins distinction for himself in the chariot races, and where his personal qualities make him, if untouched by adulation, at least the popular idol.

Queen Phaedra, a woman whose unruly passion and beauty of form suggest the magnificently beautiful bad women of the Italian Renaissance, devotes all the wealth of her allure to his seduction. His cold purity and aloofness, mingled we are to understand, with a faintly suggested disdain, but inflames her desire the more, and lends further incitement to the impetuous wish to fan in him the white heat of a first passion. He is indifferent to all her advances, warned by his early training and a kind of natural fastidiousness. Phaedra flies into the insane rage of desire denied, and vanity sorely lacerated, and, as Potiphar's wife, repeats to the husband just returned from a long journey, a story of attempted vio-

lence to her honor, committed by Hippolytus.

King Theseus,, in bitter hatred, flings upon him the mysterious curse of a wasting sickness,--through which runs the touching, maternal solicitude of the anxious mother who "presses upon him the things he had liked best in that eating and drinking she had found so beautiful." As though the flame of her love had imparted some spark of vitality to his own flickering light, he rallies, so that "suddenly he found the strength, the heart, in him, to try his fortune again with the old chariot." And then the end comes dramatically, with a tragic suddenness. Once more he comes off victor in the races. He circles a curving shore, homeward bound, when the malice of Poseidon, or Aphrodite (whose too luxurious worship he had once rejected) sends a great wave to frighten the horses which drag him to his death over the rough paving stones.

The tale as Pater sees it is a remain of that age in Greek history whose records are preserved for us, "in shorthand only", the "picturesque, intensely localized variety, in the hollow or the spur of mountain or sea-shore," the provincial, homely, deme-life in which the individual had freest play for his own energies, and whose civil and religious life was gradually absorbed in the developing authority of Athens.

In the papers on "The Beginnings of Greek Sculpture", Pater turns more directly to a consideration of Greek art, in which, because of its especial affinity for the Greek temperament and because of its imperishability, sculpture occupies the central position. Greek sculpture, our most extensive possession of the artistic product of ancient Greece, remains in a threefold isolation; an isolation from the "concomitant arts", from the architectural setting, and from indigenous elements of Greece, "the clear Greek skies, the

poetical Greek life",--preservation in the modern galleries of England and the Continent, foreign in place and age.

Pater departs somewhat from the received analysis and interpretation of the elements in Greek sculpture. "The works of the highest Greek sculpture are indeed intellectualized, if we may say so, to the utmost degree," yet, says Pater, "they are still sensuous and material, addressing themselves, in the first instance, not to the purely reflective faculty but to the eye."

> "To pass by the purely visible side of these things, then, is not only to miss a refining pleasure, but to mistake altogether the medium in which the most intellectual of the creations of Greek art, the Aeginetan or the Elgin marbles, for instance, were actually produced; even these having, in their origin, depended for much of their charm on the mere material in which they were executed; and the whole black and grey world of extant antique sculpture needing to be translated back into ivory and gold, if we would feel the excitement which the Greek seems to have felt in the presence of these objects."

And again, emphasizing the same idea, Pater says

> "Greek sculpture could not have been precisely a cold thing; and, whatever a colour-blind school may say, pure thoughts have their coldness, a coldness which has sometimes repelled from Greek sculpture, with its unsuspected fund of passion and energy in material form, those who cared much, and with much insight, for a similar passion and energy in the

coloured world of Italian painting."

Chief, perhaps, of the "concomitant arts", was metal work, finely wrought bas-reliefs, gold and silver twisted and hammered into exquisite designs, and the sterner shields and other pieces of martial equipment, in all of which, however, "use and beauty are still undivided."

In discussing the metal work which Homer describes, Pater reveals, incidentally, a most attractive quality of his style, - that striking way of his of making tangible the life which has long since crumbled away.

> "That is just the sort of metal-work which, in a certain naivete and vigour, is still of all work the most expressive of actual contact with dexterous fingers; one seems to trace in it, on every particle of the partially resisting material, the touch and play of the shaping instruments, in highly trained hands, under the guidance of exquisitely disciplined senses--that cachet, or seal of nearness to the workman's hand, which is the special charm of all good metal-work, of early metal-work in particular."

Here "the partly mythical ornaments imaginatively enlarged of the heroic age, are so revealed as tocorrespond minutely to "a world of actual handicrafts." It is, as Pater sums it up, the art of "a people whose civilization is still young, delighting, as the young do, in ornament, in the sensuous beauty of ivory and gold, in all the lovely productions of skilled fingers."

However inimical to the political and wider social well-being of humanity the rule of despots has been, it has been frequently

noticed that the arts have flourished most abundantly in the ages of tyrants, and that their reward and patronage of the fine arts has been far more grateful that the development of the aesthetic instincts fostered among republican peoples. The age of the tyrants of Athens produced many artistic advances, particularly in the way of technical inventions. Marble was sawed into thin plates and used instead of tiles for roofing material. The islands of the Aegean brought forth numerous artistic devices; coined money displaced "the old nail-shaped iron money"; the potter's art flourished. "That method of covering the interiors of stone buildings with metal plates" was elaborated and attained universal usage. The art of soldering "is coupled with the name of Glaucus of Chios, a name which, in connexion with this and other devices for facilitating the mechanical processes of art, -- for perfecting artistic effect with economy of labour, -- became proverbial, the 'art of Glaucus' being attributed to those who work well with rapidity and ease." The art of casting hollow figures belongs to this period, and "is really the discovery of liberty in composition."

And so we come, in 576 B.C., to "the first clear example,...of a communicable style", the work of two brothers, Dipoenus and Scyllis, who inaugurated and became the most illustrious representatives of the school of Sicyon. It is the period in which "the Greek workman triumphs over the first rough mechanical difficulties which beset him", in which "our own fancy must fill up the story of the unrecorded patience of the work-shop, into which we seem to peep through these scanty notices--the fatigue, the disappointments, the steps repeated, ending at last in that moment of success, which is all Pausanias records, somewhat uncertainly." To this period Pater gives

the name of "the period of graven images", because all the arts, "are combined in the making of livlier idols than had heretofore been seen."

The desire for more beautiful objects of worship grew with the passing of the early primitive religion, which "attaching itself not to the worship of visible human forms, but to relics, to natural of half-natural objects", contented itself with rude, almost ludicrous representations of the gods.

And so, in this age of conscious worship, the personality of the artist emerged, and with the growth of the subjective element in Greek art, it approached with celerity the flower of its genius.

In "The Marbles of Aegina", Pater treats of what he conceives as the most perfect example which has been preserved to us of Greek humanism, in which the Ionian, the sensuous, aesthetically pleasing element, is joined most harmoniously to the Doric, the spirit of temperance which seems to him to be the leading motif in Greek art, as in Greek philosophy and life. "In this monument of Greek chivalry, pensive and visionary as it may seem, those old Greek knights live with a truth like that of Homer or Chaucer", illustrating in Parian marble "a certain slimness and tenuity, a certain dainty lightness of poise",--that art in life which almost became a virtue in the eyes of Pater.

The volume of Greek Studies closed with the essay called "The Age of the Athletic Prizemen". It discusses a period whose artistic genius is devoted not to the dead, but to the immortalization of the living, athletic youth of the day. For the artist to achieve a full realization of this subject, - this abounding, buoyant youth - there must be no turn of "symbolic hint", for he is dealing with material drawn from the visible world of daily experience. It was an art

seeking "mastery of detail, a veritable counterfeit of nature...One had attained the very turn and texture of the crisp locks, another the very feel of the tense nerve and full-flushed vein, while with another you saw the bosom of Ladas expand, the lips part, as if for a last breath ere he reached the goal."

As we see it in the Greek Studies, the life of ancient Greece becomes a thing of color, of ceaseless activity and energy in which the human spirit, with no less creative power now, revolved with far less sophistication and bewilderment. If in his contemplation of the golden age we feel, at times, a sort of wistfulness, he never falls into the sad romantic mood of supposing that it can be recalled, that it can be anything more for us than an added element of culture, which "may cheer and enlarge our view of life." In these studies he has recreated with a rare skill of imaginative amplification an age in which temperance and beauty were freed from the narrow conventions of the fine arts and made to govern life itself. Living became the finest of the fine arts; and so we may say with Raymond Laurent, that "la Renaissance etait son esthetique, les etudes grecques son ethique".

CHAPTER V

THE PATERIAN PLATO

It is not difficult to search out in Plato the elements in him whose appeal struck so deeply and searchingly into Pater as to furnish inspiration for Plato and Platonism, a book which, according to Pater himself, has of all his writings the best chance for survival.

The key to Pater's approach to Plato is supplied in his attitude toward Greek life and literature as a whole. There is here in Pater, as in Matthew Arnold, a constant desire to establish universal values, to make estimates which shall have a vital bearing on the tremendously important matter of living a good life. Neither Pater nor Arnold is a great scholar in the sense in which we call men scholars who have devoted their whole life to the accurate, patient, investigation of one subject. Yet both have become influences in making vital for others what they have themselves found useful to the purpose suggested above, by an attitude toward Greek thought which may be called the interpretative, cultural, or appreciative attitude.

One might safely say that Pater could not be taken as an authority on the Platonic metaphysics, that he is not always wholly accurate in his judgements of the elements in Plato upon which absolute, categorical estimates can be placed. His was scarcely the philosophical mind, nor did he have the training or inclination for scholarly investigation. This is, of course, a statement of limitations, not a criticism of Pater. It is nothing detrimental to him that he is not that which he makes no pretense of being.

It is as one who attempts to understand Plato, who has thoroughly assimilated him in spirit at least and who is attempting to draw from him whatever there is to be found in his philosophy of cultural or humanistic value, that Pater becomes a significant figure.

Plato had a peculiar affinity for Pater. His was a mind remarkable for its universality and activity, one which boldly imposed itself on its contemporaries in a most significant moment of the world's history. Pater, as Paul Elmer More points out, made it his business, it was his constant and pressing desire, "to addimilate all the great movements of history."

And more than that, Plato gave to Pater a philosophy offering so much in the aesthetic appreciation of life, and an ideal of moral virtue of an acquired, disciplined temperance; clear, cold, almost transcendent, and, if rightly understood, not without its aesthetic appeal. With distinguished insight, sympathy and understanding, Pater apprehended and interpreted the rich gifts which have made Plato a great figure in literature and philosophy; drew out from them with rare selective purpose, all those qualities and implications which, to state the matter simply, would lead one to an enraptured contemplation of the beautiful and the good.

Of the three critical approaches to matters of speculative opinion which Pater notices; the dogmatic, the eclectic, and the historical, Pater himself chooses as most typical of the "Time-spirit" of his own day,, and as his own, "the historic method, which bids us replace the doctrine, or the system, we are busy with, or such an ancient monument of philosophic thought as The Republic, as far as possible in the group ofconditions,, intellectual, social, material, amid which it was actually produced, if we would really

understand it."

Adopting this attitude, he finds that so far as the elements are concerned which appear prominently in the Platonic philosophy, they are derived from earlier thinkers to a large degree. Pater shows the same striking interpretative power in tracing the sources of Plato, as characterizes his treatment of the philosophy of Plato himself, or of the humanistic side of the Platonic philosophy.

These various systems from which Plato drew so widely, and re-combined with such amazing results, Pater views broadly as tendencies, developing at the same time the extremely interesting thought that they represent certain categories, certain pre-disposed ways of looking at the world, which were indigenous to the Greek mind, and which only awaited the catalysis of the genius of a Plato to become fused.

In all ages men have learned to distrust the evidence of their senses, have reflected upon the evanescence of the empires of the world, the institutions upon which they were founded, and have observed that even the speculative reason has its imperceptible mutations which in time reverse the whole basis of thought, and seem to make bad good, and good, bad; truth and error to be identical. And so, in regarding this continuous procession of becoming, men have risen in all periods of history to preach the doctrine of change, of "the perpetual flux."

This doctrine was sponsored in Plato's day by Heraclitus, who preceded him about one generation, and who had challenged the older Eleatic belief that beneath the phenomenal world there was some sort of intangible, fundamental permanence, like the Lockian "primary qualities", or Kant's things-in-themselves.

Heraclitus' influence on Plato was profound but in the direction of antithesis, rather than of sympathy. With his eye always on the social application of the principles involved, Plato saw the Heraclitean ethics confirming the Greeks in the defects of their qualities. Pater, too, saw this clearly.

> "Heraclitus, of ancient hereditary rank, an aristocrat by birth and temper, amid all the bustle of still undiscredited Greek democracy, had reflected, not to his peace of mind, on the mutable character of political as well as of physical existence; perhaps, early as it was, on the mutability of intellectual systems also, that modes of thought and practice had already been in and out of fashion." *

It is unlikely that we would fully grasp at first glance the menace immanent in this principle as Plato did. Pater voices this idea.

> "Mobility! We do not think that a necessarily undesirable condition of life, of mind, of the physical world about us." (1)

But Plato saw the doctrine of mibility as an agency for infinitely strengthening the expansive strain in the volatile Greek nature, and disseminating the best elements in its genius. Possessing the most varied natural gifts, impatient of restraint, eager for experience and novelty, passionate individualists, the Greeks developed in their life to the fullest extent the tendency toward infinite division, toward separation off from the body politic, im-

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* Plato and Platonism. Walter Pater. London. 1910. p.13

(1) Ibid. 22

pelled by what Pater calls "the centrifugal tendency." "Independence, local and personal,--it was the Greek ideal!"

Yet whatever the doctrine of motion may mean to us in the way of multiplied sympathies, of versatility, of expanding wisdom, it was for Plato, as Pater points out, a fallacious,"vicious tendency." Plato's constant pre-occupation in philosophy was to transcend experience,to get back of phenomena, to lay hold of whatever there is of the permanent or absolute in metaphysics, with an eye, always, we may remark in passing, for the significance of his discoveries in the apprehension of beauty, and in the cultivation of the virtues of the good life. Near the first of the sixth book occurs a characteristic passage.

> "Since philosophers alone are able to lay hold of the eternal and immutable, while those who cannot attain to this, but who wander in the region of the many and multiform, are not philosophers, which of the two classes, think you, ought to be the rulers of the State?" *

Plato distrusts knowledge, opinion, and even virtue itself which rests alone on the evidence of the senses (evidence most real and genuine to Heraclitus!). Genuine knowledge can be attained only through the love of truth, the Eros, aroused by the contemplation of the beautiful and the true.

There is a Doric element in Pater as in Plato, to which the idea of "reasonable, delightful, order" is dear,--is essential to a code of ethics or a cosmogony. Such a sentence as this, occurring in the essay on The Doctrine of Rest, is a characteristic statement

* The Republic of Plato. Alexander Kerr. Chi.1918. p.323.

of the vocation of philosophy: "To enforce a reasonable unity and order, to impress some larger likeness of reason, as one knows it in one's self, upon the chaotic infinitude of impressions that reach us from every side, is what all philosophy as such proposes." And it is this constant pre-occupation with reality as Plato conceives it, this almost petulant brushing aside of the world of sense, this magnificent trust in the capacity of the intellect, which becomes the deliberate aim of the Platonic philosophy, and furnishes an adequate explanation for the constant recurrence of such a phrase as "the eternal and immutable."

Parmenides and the Eleatics sought only that "superior grade of knowledge and existence" which corresponds to Pure Being, "colorless, formless, impalpable",--a philosophy hopelessly abstract. Yet its influence may be traced in two of the most vital ideas of the Republic, the opposition of what is to what appears, and the opposition of knowledge to opinion. The Eleatic influence in Plato's ethical teaching may be traced in the extreme emphasis placed upon the rational part of the soul, the static principle in man's nature. Recalling Plato's three-fold division of the soul, and the location of the various parts in the head, heart, and viscera, we find the affections and passions sternly held in check by the head, or rational element.

There is something akin to the "mortal coldness" of the Stoic emperor Marcus Aurelius, to primitive Christianity, to the regimen of "the clear, cold, inaccessible, impossible heights of the book of the Imitation", in this doctrine of contemptus mundi. Here, if we are occupied with the progress of Greek thought, we find the seeds of that later development of Plotinus and the eclectic philosophers of Alexandria whose pre-occupation with the ineffable (key word of

Neo-Platonism!) and whose desire for a mystic, incomprehensible union with the One, produced as a harvest the most singular mysticism of the Occident, - one whose derivation from the teachings of Plato has been so obscurely understood, so frequently over-emphasized. Here, if we are occupied with the expanding, fruitful intellect of Pater himself, we see his later, matured outlook on life, in which the search for an austere beauty becomes an absorbing passion; one which clarifies and limits in an entirely healthful way the more youthful, luxuriant aestheticism of Marius the Epicurean.

It was inevitable that a mind so ceaselessly active as Plato's should seek some solution or outlet from the dilemma involved in the apparently antithetical principles of rest and motion, of multiplicity and one-ness. He found it in the Pythagorean doctrine of number. There was unity in variety! The Platonic Socrates speaks.

> "Is it not, then, Glaucon, on this account that musical education is of extreme importance, because rhythm and harmony enter most profoundly into the soul and take the strongest hold upon it, bringing grace, and making a man graceful if he is rightly educated, but if not, the reverse? and also because he who has been properly trained in music will have the keenest perception of omissions and defects in works of art or nature, and, rightly showing pleasure or disdain, will praise what is beautiful and receive it into his soul and feed upon it, and thereby become noble and good, and will justly blame and hate what is repulsive, while he is yet

young, even before he is able to apprehend the reason why, and when reason comes, he, from being thus educated, will recognize and most heartily welcome the friend with whom he is already familiar?" *

Here we find one particular ramification of that universal numerical relation which Pythagoras observed in the world, admitted as an integral part of the Perfect City, and most nobly elevated there; music, endowed by Plato with a significance other than that of the beautiful, and one we may think, facing squarely an issue on which Pater will perhaps not agree with us in thinking a higher and nobler, --the ethical.

It would be inaccurate to place all the emphasis on the ethical idea embodied in Plato's treatment of Pythagoras' doctrine of number. Two other of the ideas which have been most importantly connected with his name took root deeply in Pythagorean teachings; the famous doctrine of reminiscence, and that other so nearly identified with the name of Plato, metempsychosis, "the transmigration of souls through various forms of the bodily life, under a law of moral retribution." These, however, verge very nearly upon being what we would call the basis of a formal philosophical system. And it is not by systems that we will come to an understanding of Pater. Pater's function is neither that of apologist, nor of scholarly commentator. He is a partial exegete, an interpreter of those elements in Plato which appealed to him; the lover of sensuous beauty, the greater lover of "the central and inner beauty", the richly gifted man infinitely impressible with the emotional and poetic values of life.

* The Republic. p.153

There is no nicer question in letters than the business of estimating the relative importance of Plato and the real Socrates in the Republic and in the Socratic dialogues reported by Plato, nor one which has proved more attractive to the generations of scholars who have attempted to evaluate and distinguish the elements which go to make up the Platonic Socrates. In introducing the subject of Plato and Socrates, Pater says, referring to the meager independent sources of information we possess about Socrates, "The Socrates of Xenophon is one of the simplest figures in the world". In the same connection, Paul Elmer More remarks,

> "Now Xenophon was a most amiable gentleman and an admirable writer, but with the least possible tincture of philosophy or moral enthusiasm in his soul; and it is generally recognized that his Memoirs of Socrates, while presenting a faithful picture of the master's daily life, quite fail to grasp its higher and more universal meaning." *

From this we may gather correctly enough, I think, that the matter of disentangling two such minds as those of Plato and Socrates, so intimately and closely knit as those of Plato and Socrates, is one to be approached in great humbleness of spirit. The relation, so intricate, and of such stupendous significance in the history of philosophical thought, began when Plato was just matured. It came at a time when a corrective force could make itself felt most tellingly upon his expanding, but still impressible nature. Socrates served as a much needed balance wheel, a restraining influence, to narrow and give a definite "set" to the scope of the genius of the young Plato, and to guide it toward the most productive ends. But Socrates served

* The Judgement of Socrates, Paul Elmer More, p. 3, Series, Boston 1898 Riverside Literature

as more than a mere stabilizing device. He was urged on, as we say, by a passion for the real, the distinguishing between appearance and the essence of things, between fleeting phenomena and the eternal verities.

One sees in this the explanation of his tortuous logic, the scrupulous attention to the fixing with meticulous exactness the precise meaning of the most ordinary terms used in practical, every-day affairs. All this sounds familiar enough to the student of the Republic. It is, indeed, as we have come to view it, Platonic. From Socrates' super-refinement of common-sense, was born the intellectualism of the younger philosopher, into which he introduced the elements of a richer, less austere, and more poetic mind. "All that is best and largest in his own matured genius he identifies with his master; and, when we speak of Plato, generally what we are really thinking of is the Platonic Socrates."

> "Austere as he seems, and on well-considered principle really is, his temperance or austerity, aesthetically so winning, is attained only by the chastisement, the control, of a variously interested, a richly sensuous nature."

This is a pregnant sentence: throwing a searching, illuminating light on Pater himself.

The beautiful and the Good! It is a union Pater could not have contemplated without enthusiasm, one which, occurring in Plato, must have confirmed him in certain of his own most cherished ideals. Yet there is a curious suggestion of a hierarchy of virtue here too. The order of writing "the beautiful and the good" was not accidental. At another place Pater reflects that Plato is tried not only with "the difficulty of arbitrating between some inward beauty, and that

which is outward;"...but "that even to the truest eyesight, to the best trained faculty of soul, the beautiful would never come to seem strictly concentric with the good." This failure to bring the two principles into harmony (famous word!) involved Pater in a struggle, intensified so far beyond the ordinary because of his poetic nature, delicately responsive to sensuous appeal,--a struggle whose outcome was, that the two principles, as he saw them, were irreconcileable. And so, failing magnificently, with an appealing gesture, he chose,--the beautiful! It was nothing other than the triumph of the dominant principle in his nature, one to be viewed charitably as inevitable.

Yet Pater is no pagan reveller in the pleasures of sense. He demonstrates everywhere a sober pre-occupation with matters of ethical import, which show clearly how near to his heart the problems of conduct and moral harmony lay. With Aristotle's definition of virtue in mind, perhaps---"virtue is a disposition or habit, involving deliberate purpose or choice, consisting in a mean that is relative to ourselves, the mean being determined by reason, or as a prudent man would determine it"---he exalts not the natural temperance of a cold or phlegamtic disposition, but the temperance that is acquired; the temperance, in short, of such a man as Plato, or as Pater himself, in whom the expanding or centripetal tendency operated constantly to divert the vital energy away from the central purpose of life.

Yet it would be willful blindness to overlook, in the passage concerning the temperance of Plato, quoted at the beginning of this section, that "his temperance or austerity" is "aesthetically so winning." This, certainly, is a treacherous advocacy of the moral life!

In approaching Plato's doctrine, Pater still keeps in mind what, by his "singularly intimate interpretative power" he conceives to be the prominent features of the Platonic personality--the "poetic thought", the "imaginative reason." Here one recalls again what was said at the outset of Plato and Platonism. The elements in Plato were all germinal in Greek thought long before his day. His distinguished contribution was in giving to them their form, in combining them, fusing them together, and in endowing them with a significance which they could never have come to have without being passed through the crucible of a great mind. Pater feels constantly this close touch with the past, and awareness of the temper and tendency embodied in the Platonic thought.

> "The Platonic doctrine of 'Ideas', as was said, is not so much a doctrine, as a way of speaking or feeling about certain elements of the mind; and this temper, this peculiar way of feeling, of speaking, which for most of us will have many difficulties, is not uniformly noticeable in Plato's Dialogues, but is to be found more especially in the Phaedo, the Symposium, and in certain books of The Republic, above all in the Phaedrus."*

The same is true of the famous Platonic dialectics. The Socratic dialogue, indicates by its name, the origin of the method of procedure in the Platonic Dialogue. "The Platonic Dialogue is the literary transformation, in a word, of what was the intimately

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*Plato and Platonism. p.165.

home-grown method of Socrates, not only of conveying truth to others, but of coming by it for himself." Plato is striving always with this conscious, painstaking, artful, sometimes sophistical method, to set up a standard, a criterion for social, or ethical values; a tremendously practical undertaking!

The search for "universal definitions" became the proper business of all real knowledge. It was a slow process; painful, deadly logical, demanding constant correction and qualification. Yet it determined the theoretical and practical nature of Justice, and built the Perfect City! It is not given to humanity to come to a nearer approximation of perfection (if I may be allowed a dangerously absolute term!). One experiences in the Republic a real sense of elevation, a very inspiriting admiration for the possibilities of fearless, utterly sincere intelligence, particularly in such a direct, honest speech as this, so characteristic of the Platonic Socrates;

> "I do not yet know, myself; but we must just go where the argument carries us, as a vessel runs before the wind."

Turning to Sparta, where Plato found certain qualities of Laconism which he felt necessary to the complete development of his own ideal Republic, Pater shows again how the complexion of his own intellectual life is determined to a large degree by certain of his favorite ideas. Again, it is the aesthetic quality which he is looking for, and which he finds abundantly. "The very trees--how they grow--exercise an aesthetic influence on character." I find at no point in Pater the suggestion that character, or those stabilizing moral and ethical principles upon which character is founded, may interfere in the moulding of aesthetics.

At another point Pater allows his fancy to play around the idea of an Athenian visitor versed in the City of Plato's Republic, coming among the Dorians. He notices that the people are very susceptible to "eternal aesthetic influence", but have too, "a certain strongly conceived disciplinary or ethic ideal" which revealed itself in "a self-denying humour."

In this nearly parallel statement of the values involved in the moral and aesthetic ideal, we find the former exalted as high as we shall ever discover it in Pater. Still again, Pater views with comprehensive and sympathetic eye, the spectacle of Laconian life, "with its earnestness, its precision and strength, its loyalty to its own type, its impassioned completeness", only to find it "a spectacle aesthetically, at least, very interesting." I cannot avoid More's comment. "Really, a more complete perversion of history has not often been conceived." The remark strikes me as possessing an unescapable reasonableness. I cannot but think that the marked aesthetic element which Pater found in the life of Lacedaemonia was largely read in it by the peculiar twist of his own temperament. He saw Sparta through the romantic, poetic haze of his own nature, through mists which blurred the landscape of Lacedaemonia so that the rugged line and mass of the Lacedaemonian mountains were lost in faintly outlined peaks of azure. He was deceived by a beautiful mirage into thinking that he was gazing back through history upon an aesthetic Arcadia, where morality, and virtue, and goodness, were all the willing handmaidens of beauty.

I could not end this section of the discussion more aptly than with a sentence which More takes from Plato: "When any one prefers beauty to virtue, what is this but the real and utter dishonor of the soul?"

Recapitulation.

Aesthetic beauty, I believe, is still placed above moral beauty in Pater's mind, though there is a notable progress here over the relation between the two in Marius The Epicurean, for example. This may be taken to represent the fuller, more sober, and more mature appreciation of the relative values of the two contrasting beauties in the full life which he so consistently enjoined upon his contemporaries. And this fact, largely disregarded and almost always underestimated, may be the key to a nearer and more sympathetic appreciation of Pater than would be otherwise possible.

He is here in his Platonism something far different from the Pater satirized by Mallock in his New Republic. This, the farthest development of Pater, shows how slight is his kinship with the school of young writers who later came to fasten upon certain elements in his creed,--the intense life, the careful development of the perception of beauty in the world of sense, which they took over so enthusiastically,--without scrutinizing the strong tendency in the Paterian man to contemplate moral beauty, to exalt the function of reason in reenforcing, inhibiting, and governing in all ways the report of the senses.

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